



# Adur Adaptation Project

Year 2 Annual Report (2025)

Reporting on delivery across the River Adur catchment

Prepared for funders, partners and stakeholders

Funded by the Environment Agency and West Sussex County Council

Delivered by the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust

# Introduction

Across the River Adur catchment, gradual but meaningful change is taking shape. Through natural flood management, habitat restoration, and improvements to water quality, the Adur Adaptation Project is beginning to reconnect rivers with their landscapes and deliver lasting benefits for both people and wildlife. Now in its second year, the Project has built momentum — moving from early planning into delivery, establishing a growing pipeline of projects, and demonstrating how working with nature can create a more resilient and healthier catchment.

## Project Overview

The Adur Adaptation Project is a partnership-led initiative delivering practical, nature-based solutions to reduce flood risk while enhancing the environment. Led by the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust, in collaboration with the Environment Agency and West Sussex County Council, the project reflects a shared commitment to working with natural processes to create long-term resilience.

This report provides an overview of progress during the past year, showing how funding has been translated into tangible outcomes on the ground, alongside the cumulative impact achieved over the first two years of the project. From implementing measures that contribute to reducing flood risk across the catchment to delivering habitat improvements and river restoration, the project is delivering benefits across multiple objectives.

Alongside delivery, the project continues to build strong partnerships with landowners, communities, and stakeholders—creating a growing pipeline of opportunities for future work. For funders, this report highlights progress against agreed outcomes and the value of continued investment. For members and the wider public, it provides insight into how working with natural processes can support long-term flood risk management while improving water quality and supporting wildlife.

## Year 2: At a Glance



**4,340**

Floodplain Trees Planted



**80**

Leaky Dams Installed



**540m**

Cross-slope hedgerow planted



**6**

Water retention areas constructed



**3**

Flow Gauging Stations Installed



**£29,390**

Volunteer Time & In-kind Support



**Additional  
funding support  
received from**



# Year 2 Highlights

Year 2 marks a shift from planning into delivery, with projects now being implemented across the catchment. Our work at Oaklands, near Henfield, highlights how nature-based solutions are being delivered in practice—bringing together flood management, habitat creation, and community involvement in a single project.

## In Focus: Oaklands



Using traditional heavy horses to install large woody material



Practical delivery in partnership with landowners and volunteers.

Oaklands provides a clear example of how funding is being translated into practical delivery on the ground—bringing together landowners, partners, and volunteers to implement nature-based solutions in a cost-effective and collaborative way.

A key feature of the project was the use of traditional heavy horses to install large woody material, enabling six leaky dams to be created with minimal impact on the land, providing both environmentally sensitive and cost-effective mechanisms for delivery.

Alongside this, over 2,000 trees were planted and 250 metres of native hedgerow established. Additional support from the Woodland Trust enabled the project to be completed without exceeding budget, demonstrating how the project is using external funding and partnerships to enhance delivery.

Strong volunteer uptake, including corporate groups, played a key role, providing valuable capacity on the ground while helping to build wider awareness, engagement, and support for nature-based solutions.

## Oaklands Farm Outcomes



**3,250**

Floodplain Trees Planted



**250 m**

Cross-slope hedgerow planted



**6**

Leaky Dams Installed



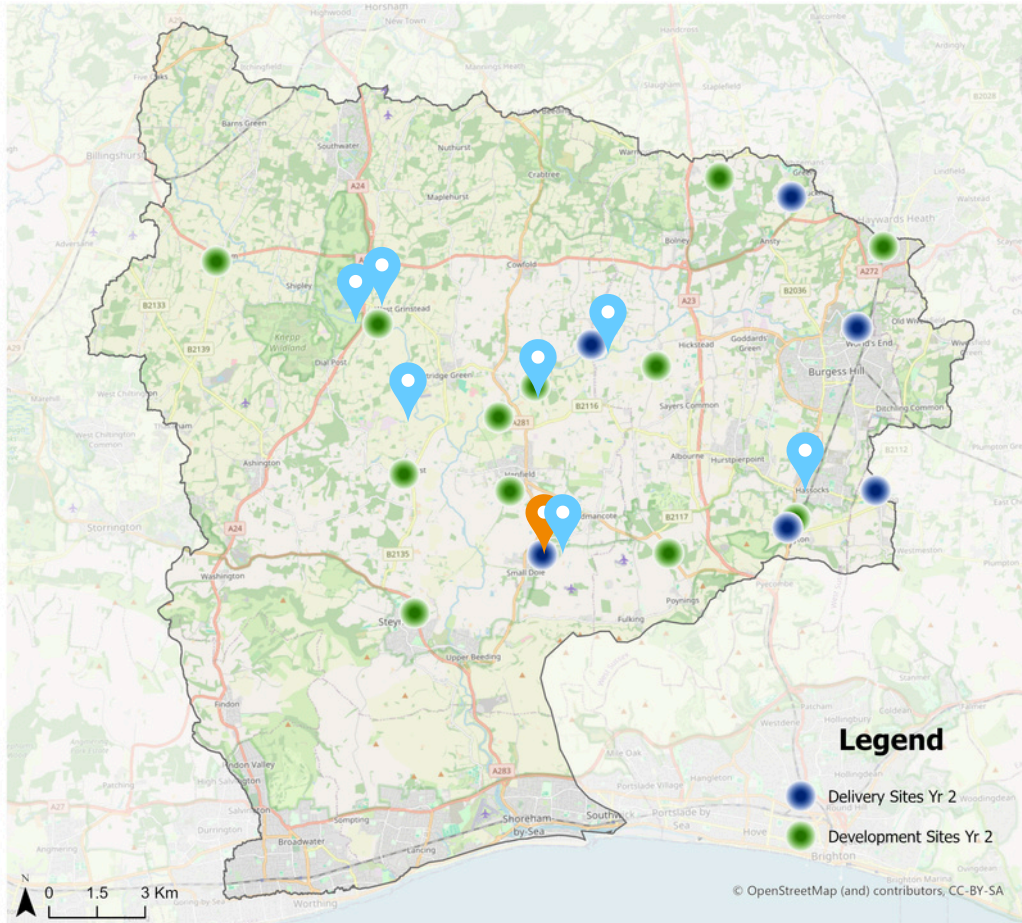
**69**

Volunteers Engaged

# Delivery Across the Catchment

Year 2 has seen delivery taking place across the catchment, alongside the identification of new opportunities that will shape future phases of the project. Together, these activities are building both immediate impact and a strong foundation for continued delivery.

## River Adur Catchment, Sussex





Sites delivered and developed across the catchment in Year 2

## From Engagement to Delivery

Alongside delivery, site visits and landowner engagement have been central to identifying future opportunities. These are informed by catchment data, modelling, and monitoring—including tools such as SciMAP and flow gauging—to help target locations where natural flood management and river restoration measures can have the greatest impact.

This evidence-led approach ensures that opportunities identified through site visits are used to inform the most appropriate interventions for each location, building a pipeline of projects that are both practical and effective.

-  Oaklands
-  Flow Gauging Locations

## Year 2 Delivery summary



6

Project Sites for Delivery



91

Interventions installed



12

Sites Added to the Pipeline

**Sites visited this year form the foundation for delivery in Year 3 and beyond.**

# Monitoring & Understanding the Catchment

Monitoring is a key part of the project, helping to build understanding of how different parts of the catchment respond to rainfall. While data collection is still in its early stages, seven monitoring locations have been established with initial analysis beginning to provide insights into how water moves through the landscape and varies between sub-catchments.

Rainfall patterns are broadly consistent across monitoring sites, with seasonal variation showing wetter conditions in autumn and winter, and more variable, event-driven rainfall during summer months.

Early analysis of flow and depth data shows clear differences between sites, reflecting local landscape characteristics. Some locations respond more quickly to rainfall, while others show slower, more gradual responses.

Although the dataset is currently limited, these early findings are helping to build a clearer picture of catchment behaviour and will inform future decision-making and targeting of interventions.

## 7 Monitoring Sites Established

Three with 12+ Months of Data

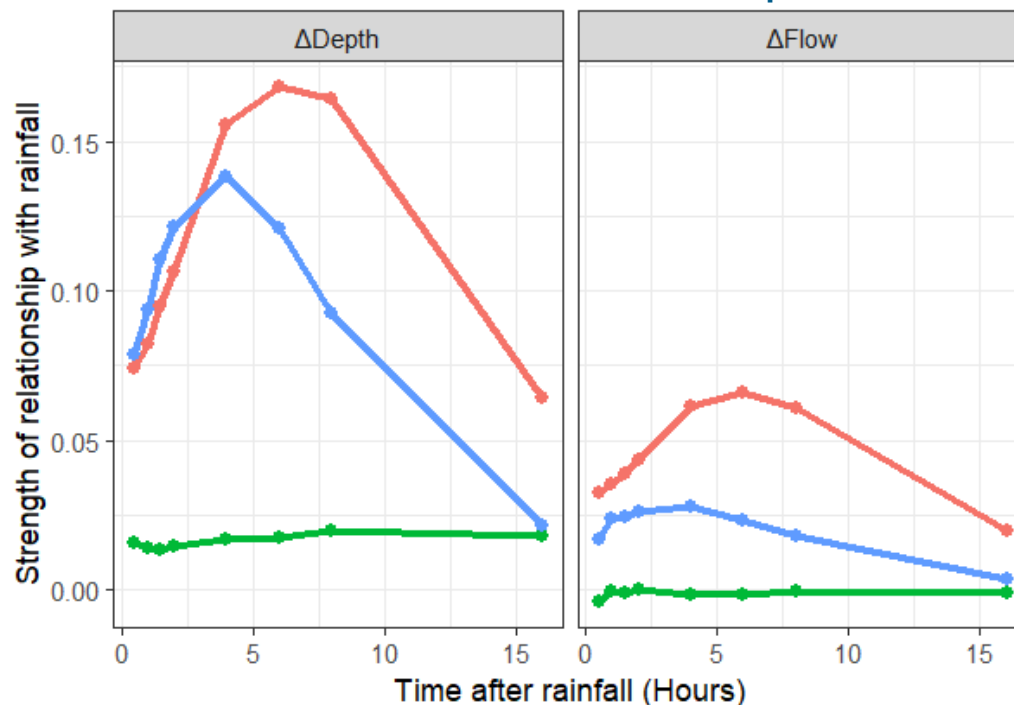
## 4 Rainfall Monitoring Stations

Data from Met Office Gauging Points

## Ongoing Analysis Supporting Future Delivery

Providing Focal Areas & Monitoring Outcomes

### How Different Parts of the Catchment Respond to Rainfall



Monitoring site — Honeybridge — Knepp — Woods\_Mill

Monitoring data is beginning to show how different parts of the catchment respond to rainfall, highlighting variations in response speed across sites.

Monitoring Programme  
Supported By

H2Ogeo  
Hydrogeology & Environmental Consultancy

VAN WALT  
equipment for soil and water research

University  
of Brighton

# Connecting People & Place

The project has continued to raise awareness, build partnerships, and create opportunities for people to get involved in nature-based solutions. These activities are strengthening understanding of the challenges facing the catchment, deepening connections between people and the landscape, and supporting a growing network of volunteers and partners who are actively contributing to delivery.



**239**

Volunteers assisted

**5**

Events Attended

**7**

Community Talks

**50k+**

Facebook views



## Events and Outreach

The project has been represented at local events across the catchment, helping to raise awareness of natural flood management, connect with communities, and share the benefits of working with natural processes.



## Sharing Knowledge

Talks and presentations have helped build understanding of the project, engaging community groups, partners, and stakeholders in how nature-based solutions can reduce flood risk while enhancing the environment.









## Volunteering

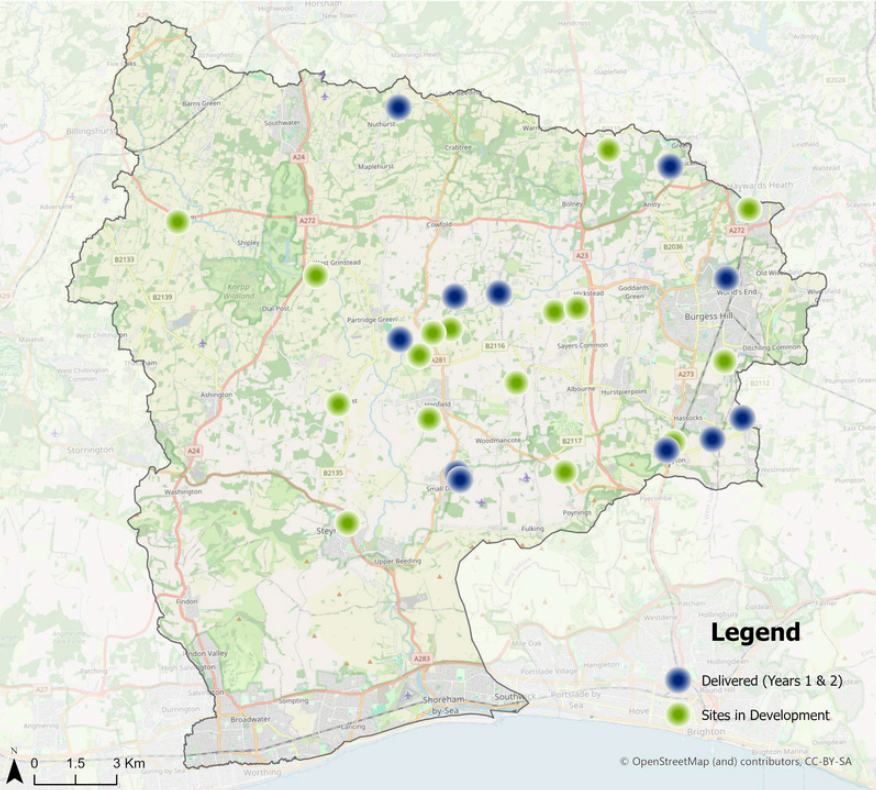
Volunteering has been a key part of delivery, offering hands-on opportunities. From tree planting to installing leaky dams, volunteers and corporate groups have contributed valuable time while learning about the project.

# Cumulative Impact

Informed by an evidence led approach, the first two years of the project have seen delivery expand across an increasing number of sites throughout the catchment. Together, these cumulative outcomes reflect a clear increase in activity, landowner engagement, and participation - building the scale of delivery needed to support long-term change.

					
<b>11</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4,340</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>740m</b>
Projects Delivered	Landowners Engaged	Retention Ponds Created	Floodplain Trees Planted	Leaky Dams Installed	Cross-slope hedgerow planted

## River Adur Catchment, Sussex



### Growing Impact Across the Catchment

As delivery expands across the catchment, interventions are beginning to form a connected network of sites. This approach is enabling natural processes to be restored more widely across the landscape, supporting a more coordinated and long-term approach to catchment resilience.

### Examples of Projects Delivered



Natural flood management measures delivered include retention ponds, tree planting, and leaky dams — helping to slow flows, increase infiltration, and reduce runoff.

**18%**  
Woodland Creation  
Target

**25%**  
Monitoring Network  
Established

✓  
Small-scale  
Interventions

✓  
Growing Project  
Pipeline

# Looking Ahead

The progress achieved over the past two years demonstrates the value of working with natural processes to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and restore habitats across the catchment. A growing pipeline of identified projects is ready to move into delivery as further funding becomes available



## Continuing Delivery

Building on this momentum, the project is well positioned to deliver further natural flood management measures across the catchment. Site visits and landowner engagement have identified a wide range of opportunities, from small-scale interventions to larger, landscape-scale projects that can deliver multiple benefits for communities and the environment.

## Future Investment Opportunities

Demand for delivery continues to grow, with more potential projects identified than current funding allows. Continued investment will enable the project to expand its reach, accelerate delivery, and maximise the benefits of nature-based solutions across the catchment. By working in partnership, there is a clear opportunity to build on the progress made to date and deliver lasting impact at scale.

***With thanks to the Environment Agency, West Sussex County Council, and additional supporters including Woodland Trust and Bupa***

By continuing to work with natural processes, partners, and local communities, the project can build a more resilient catchment—protecting homes, supporting wildlife, and delivering benefits for years to come.

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