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What we will cover today

- Role of Flood Risk Management Organisations
- Rights and Roles of Riparian Owners
- Permitting
- Maintenance – Best Practice
- Flood Resilience

If we cannot answer your question today, we can take enquiries away or help you find out where to get answers.

The Environment Agency's Role

Strategic overview for flood risk and managing the risk from main rivers, reservoirs, and the sea.

Statutory advisor: we provide advice to local authorities on planning applications, local and strategic plans, environmental assessments, and nationally significant infrastructure projects.

Infrastructure provider: we allocate central government funding for and build FCERM schemes. We also operate, maintain and replace significant national flood and coastal defences.

Category 1 emergency responder under the Civil Contingency Act 2004: warning and informing communities, preparing for and assessing the risk of emergencies.

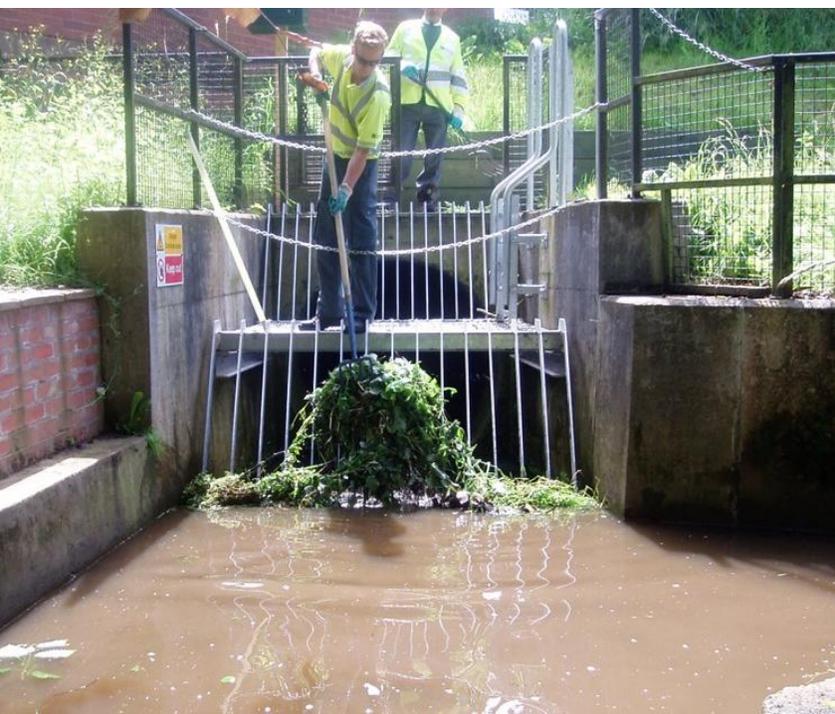
Permissive Powers

The Environment Agency has **Permissive Powers** to maintain and improve main rivers for the efficient passage of flood flows and the management of water levels for various river users and to protect the environment.

The Environment Agency does NOT have a duty to carry out either maintenance or new works on main rivers.

Funding is allocated to work where it provides the greatest benefit to flood risk to better protect people, property, and wildlife.

Where we do carry out routine maintenance work, this might include: • grass cutting and weed control • removing obstructions from rivers • repairing and operating sluice gates and pumping stations



Managing main rivers: who is responsible?

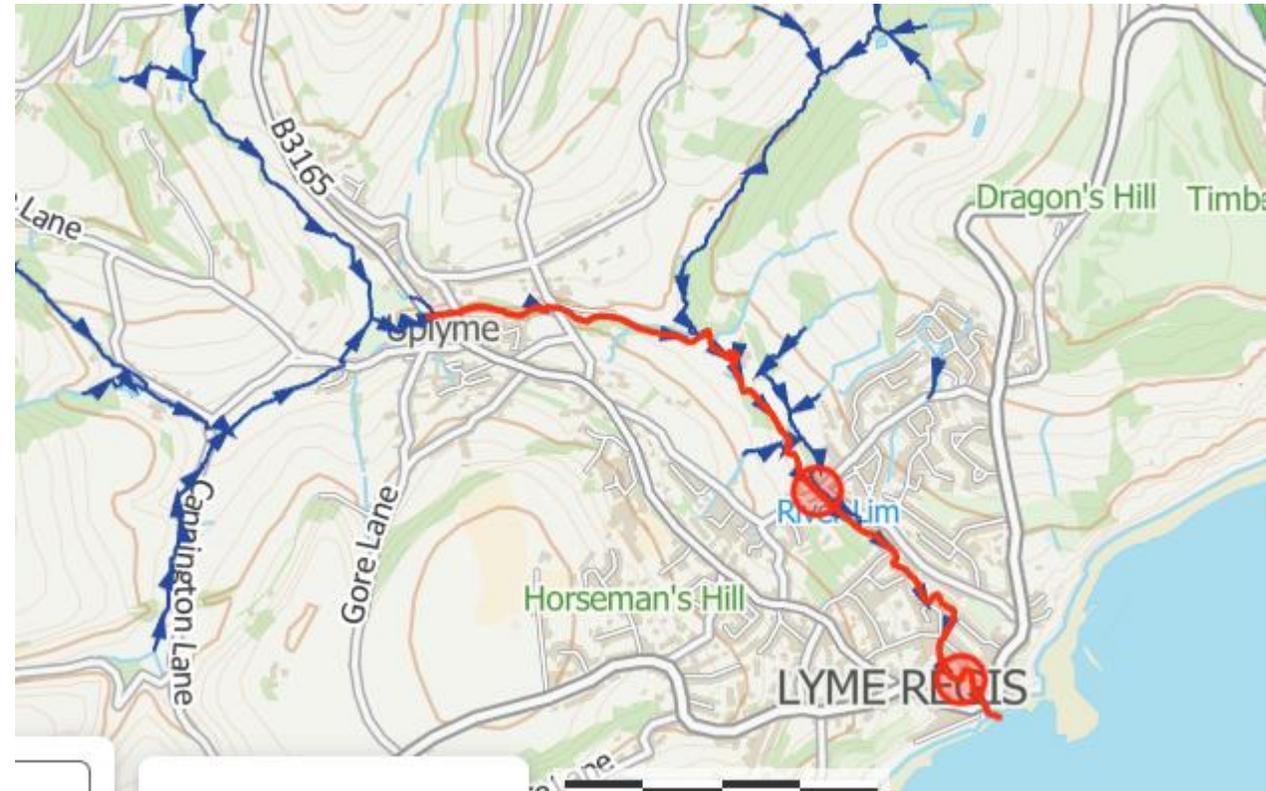
Some watercourses in England are designated as ‘main rivers’. These tend to be larger rivers and streams with the highest flood risk, although they can also be small watercourses, drainage channels or covered culverts.

- **Ultimately, responsibility for maintaining a main river falls to the riparian owner.**
- The Environment Agency, using its permissive powers, can carry out maintenance, improvement, or construction work on main rivers to manage flood risk and protect the environment.
- These powers are permissive only – the Environment Agency is not obliged to carry out either maintenance or new works on main rivers.
- The Environment Agency also has permitting and enforcement powers.

Are all watercourses treated equally?

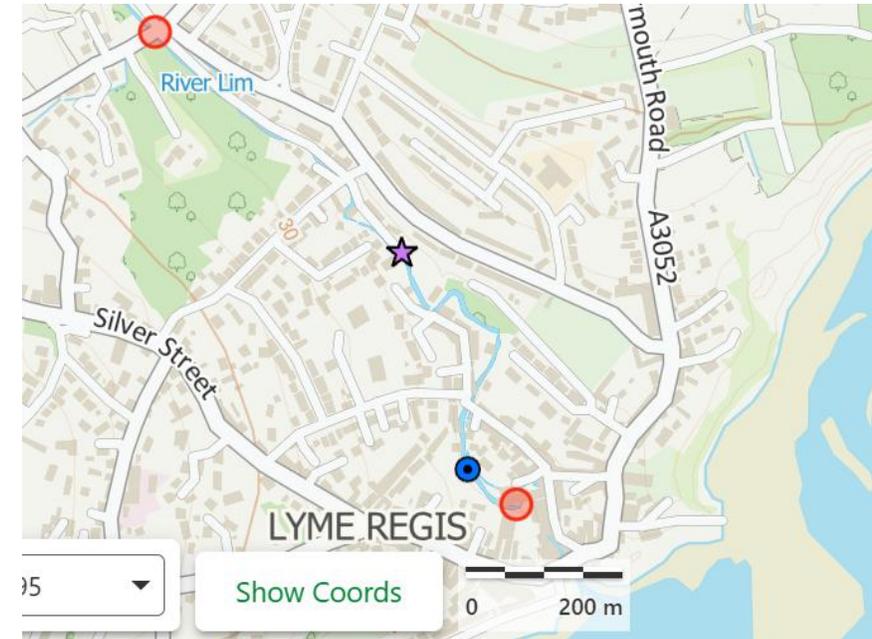
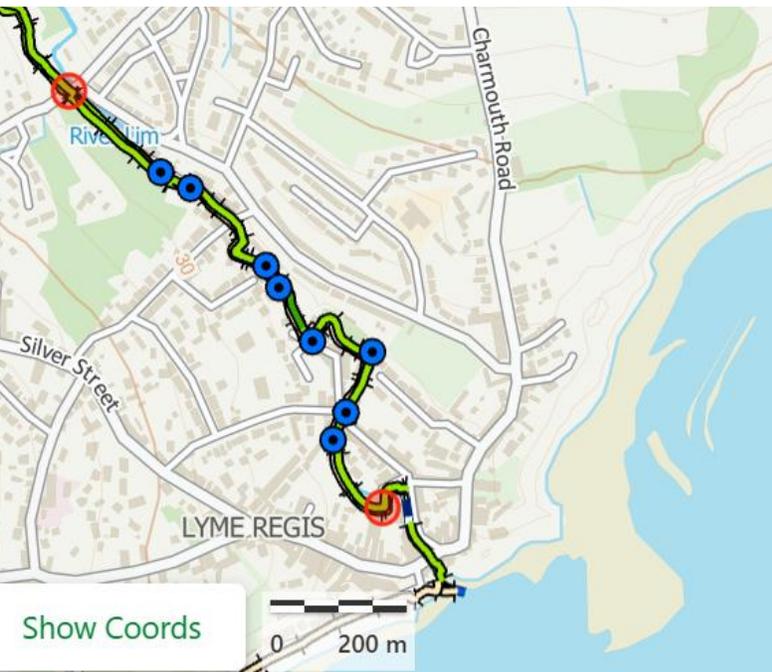
Not all watercourses are the same. There is an important distinction between those which are classified as 'Main Rivers' and those which are known as 'Ordinary Watercourses'.

This map shows all watercourses. The red lines show the Main Rivers and the blue lines show the Ordinary Watercourses.



Environment Agency Assets in Lyme Regis

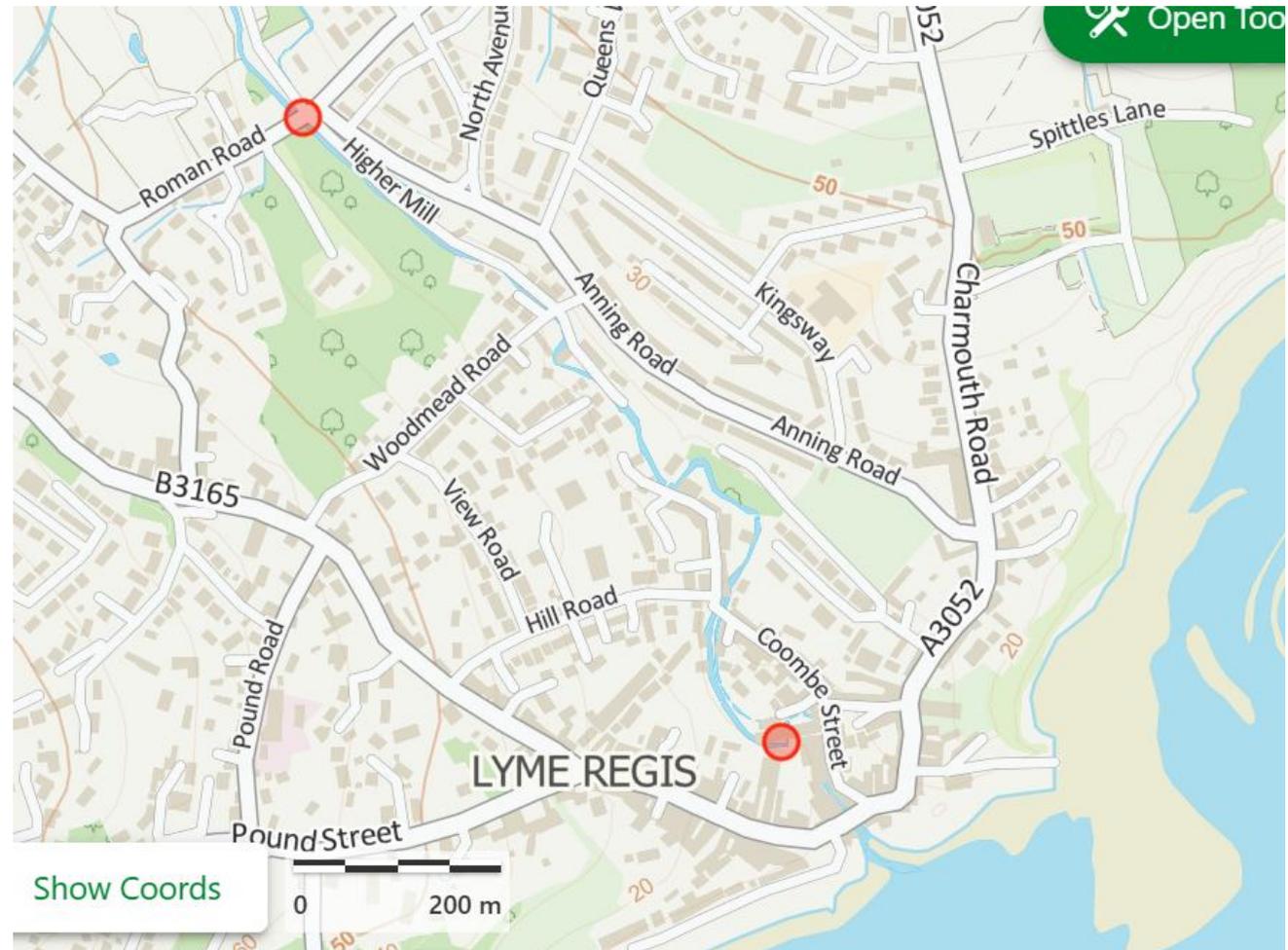
- There is no EA maintained flood alleviation scheme in Lyme Regis.
- There are x 2 Assets under our maintenance. X 1 Flap Valve, X 1 Monitoring Site
- Much of the channel is historic, canalized & under riparian ownership.



- The map to the left shows elements of the River Lim under 3rd Party Ownership & Riparian responsibility.
- This includes, walls, flap valves, culverts, natural banks, weirs. Etc.

Previous Maintenance

- Approx. Length 850 Meters.
- Previous maintenance constituted 1 x annual vegetation cut, undertaken in Autumn for conveyance.
- Undertaken by EA & or contractors.
- Ad-hoc basis using EA permissive powers. Last undertaken in 2022/23.



Withdrawal of Maintenance

- Reason for withdrawal and steps taken
 - Rising operational costs
 - Low risk from fluvial flooding
 - Withdrawal of maintenance notices sent out in June 2025
- Next steps
 - Consultation
 - Purpose
 - Timeframes

Your Watercourse: Rights and Roles

Guidance

Owning a watercourse

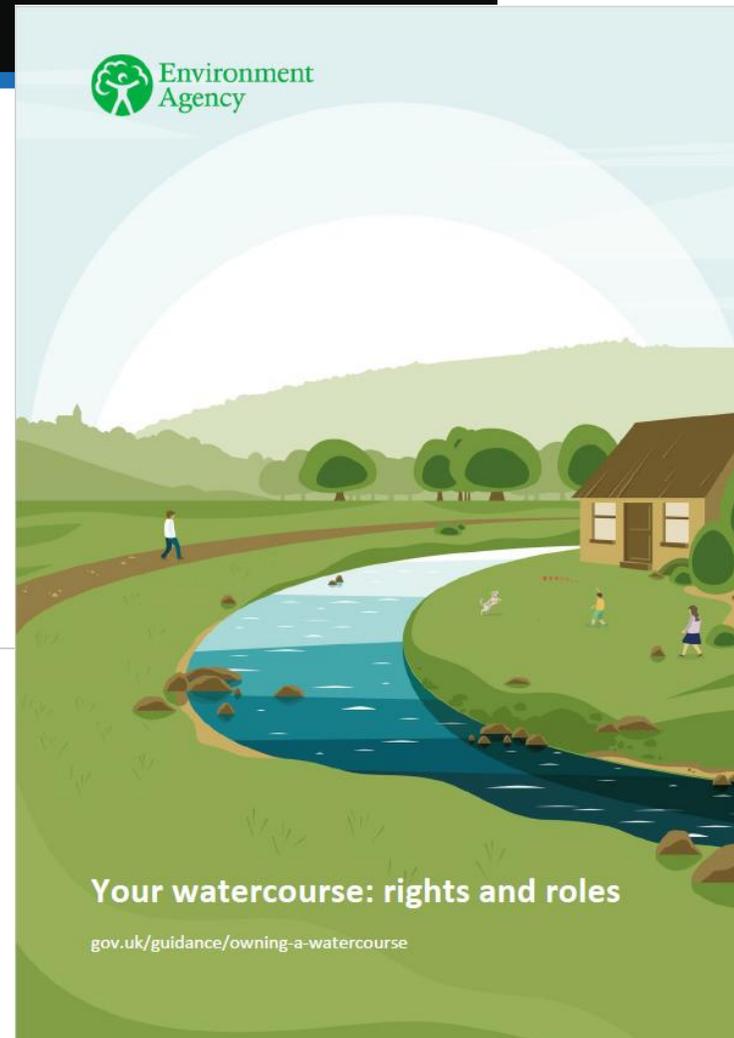
Your responsibilities and rules to follow for watercourses on or near your property, and permissions you need to do work around them.

From: [Environment Agency](#)

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[Owning a watercourse - GOV.UK](#)
www.gov.uk

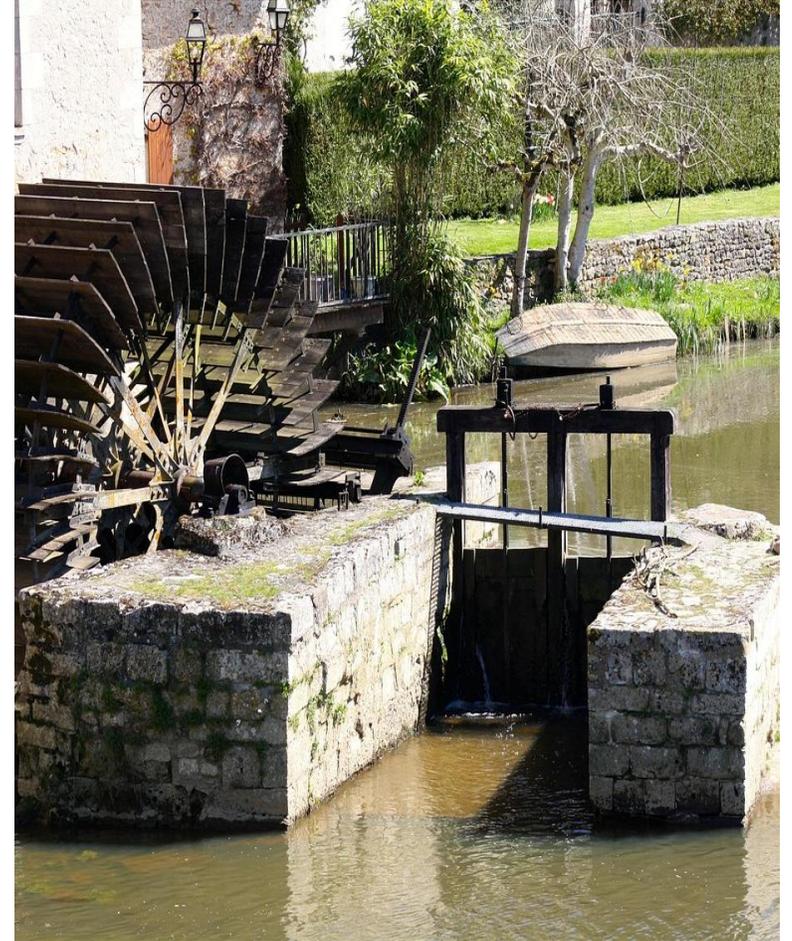


Your Rights as a Riparian Owner

- Receive the water in its natural state, undiminished in flow, quantity, and quality.
- Protect your property from flooding and your land from erosion.
- Abstract a maximum of 20 cubic metres (20,000 litres) of water per day without licence.
- Use the water in a watercourse for normal purposes, such as watering livestock, Use the for other purposes e.g., milling, manufacturing or irrigation

Your responsibilities as a riparian owner

- Let water flow naturally with undiminished quantity and quality
- Do not obstruct the flow of a watercourse to the detriment of your neighbours.
- Keep structures you own, such as weirs, mill gates, moorings, culverts, and access bridges, free from obstruction and in safe condition



Your responsibilities as a riparian owner

- Don't disturb certain species or habitats on the banks or in the watercourse such as birds and fish spawning/eggs
- Prevent invasive species from spreading into the wild or neighboring land.
- Do not allow the watercourse to become polluted. Don't throw garden waste, wastewater, chemicals, or anything else which could cause pollution on the banks or in the water.



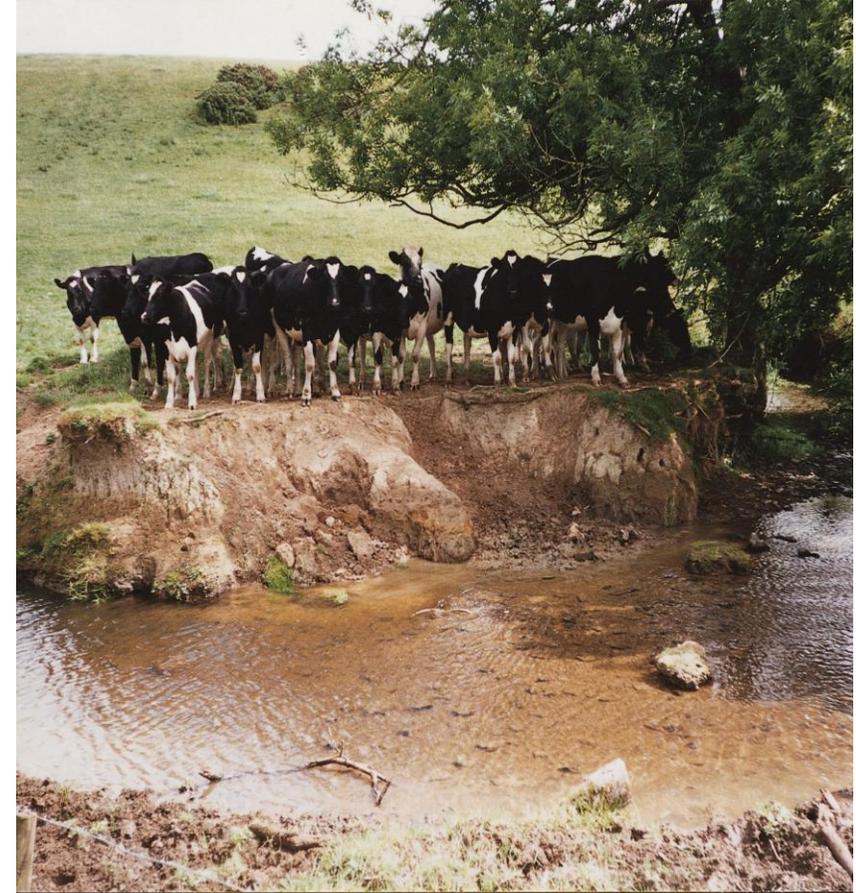
Environmental Permitting



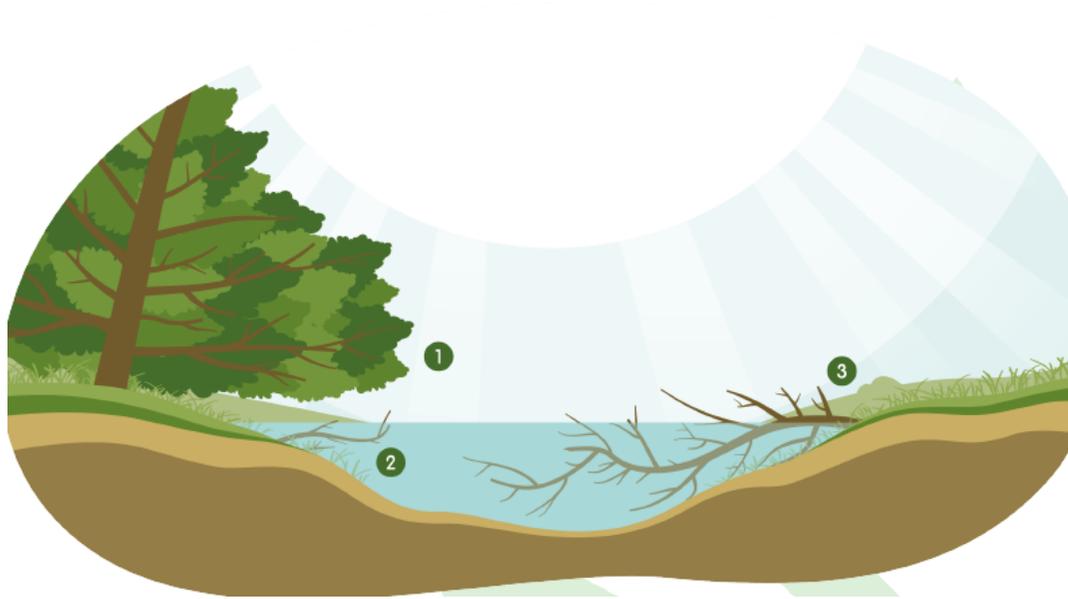
- Various licenses/permissions might be required.
- Main River works (within 8m fluvial / 16m tidal) - Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP)
- Ordinary Watercourse - land drainage consent
- Other relevant permissions might be needed, such as waste, impoundment, abstraction or discharge licences.

Permitting: Exemptions

- Many activities may be covered by registering an exemption [Exempt flood risk activities: environmental permits - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/exempt-flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits)
- Exemptions are free but must be registered
- The activity must meet the description and conditions required for that exemption



Best Practice – Trees, Branches & Shrubs



1. Trees along a river can provide stability to the bank, shading for the watercourse to reduce weed growth and important wildlife habitats. When managing overhanging branches, trim only those lower branches that may cause an obstruction to the flow of water.
2. Consider leaving in branches that fall in the channel, simply pulling and securing them into along the bank if they are causing an obstruction.
3. If trees or branches fall in the channel, only remove them if they pose a specific flood or navigation risk.

Silt and detritus may be good for wildlife, and removal may cause issues downstream. Make sure you understand why you are removing any obstruction and think about its consequences.

Best Practice – Vegetation Management

1. Bankside vegetation: where bankside vegetation must be managed, consider leaving one bank uncut, in particular during bird nesting season.
2. Marginal vegetation: unless there is a clear flood risk, retain 20% of the marginal vegetation as valuable wildlife habitat and bank protection.
3. Vegetation management: if vegetation management is required, consider cutting only one side of the channel. Always ensure the conditions are safe and the appropriate equipment is used. Avoid bird nesting season and always check for the presence of wildlife. Ensure you do not damage the channel bed or bank sides.

If possible, leave vegetation near the river for 24 hours and then remove from the bankside. This helps wildlife, prevents blockages, and helps water quality issues. Always remove immediately if the vegetation includes non-native invasive species.

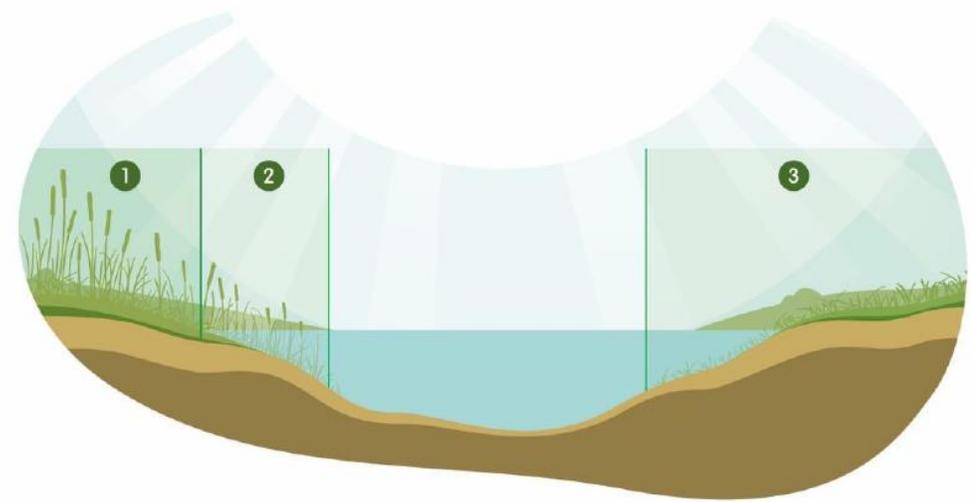


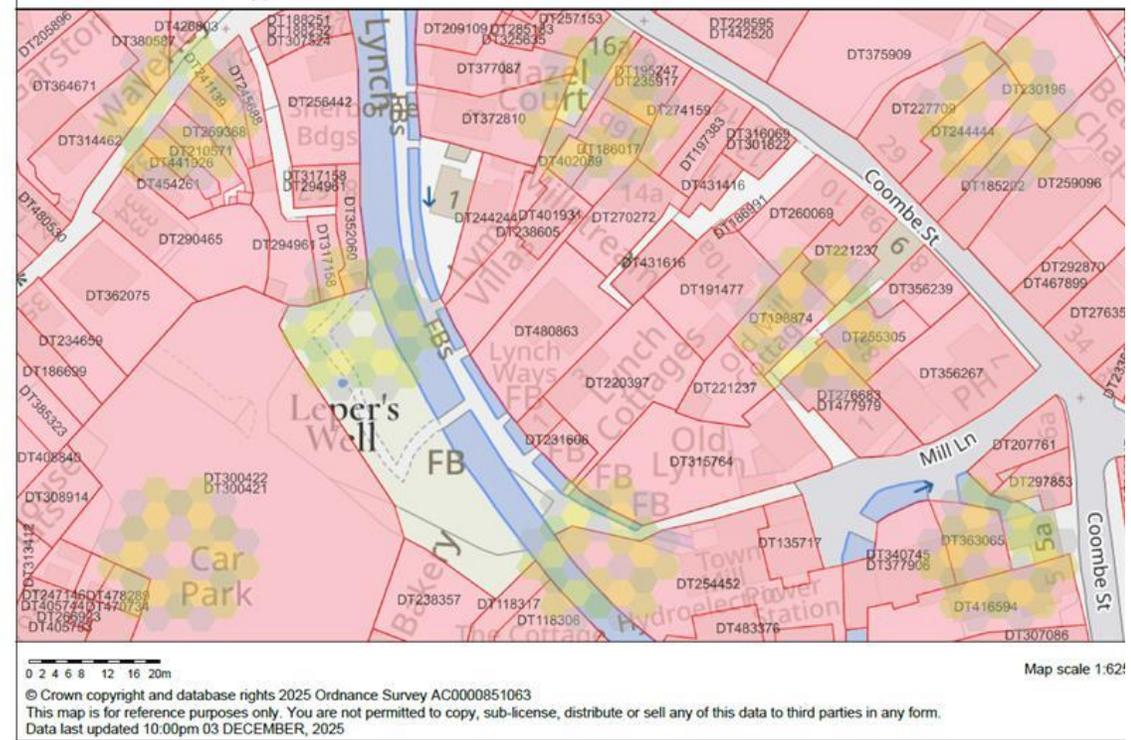
Diagram 2 - An example of how to manage a watercourse, retaining wildlife benefits such as marginal vegetation.

Diagram 2 shows a cross-section of a watercourse. On the left is uncut vegetation above the water (labelled 1) and on the water's edge (labelled 2). On the right bank (labelled 3) is cut grass.

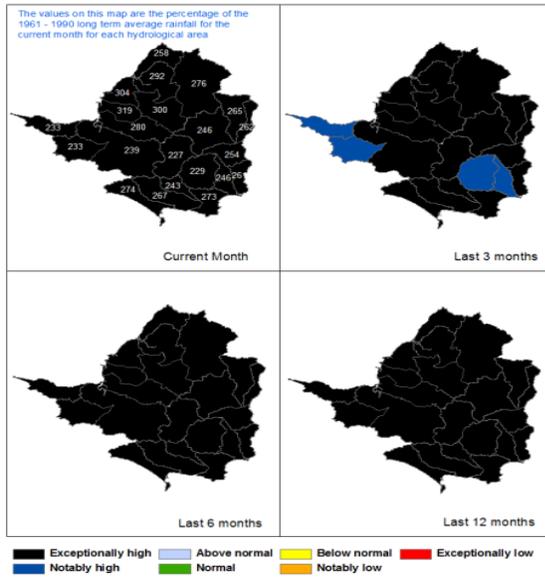
Safe working – risks and hazards

- Always consider your health and safety when taking care of your watercourse, and never put yourself at risk.
- Do not go inside a culvert. You could get trapped or poisoned by gases.
- Do not block access to any authorities who may need to carry out routine or emergency works
- Do not enter floodwater – just 15cm of fast flowing water can knock you off your feet, and hazards can be hidden in the water.
- During flooding, if there is a blockage on a main river, call the incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60

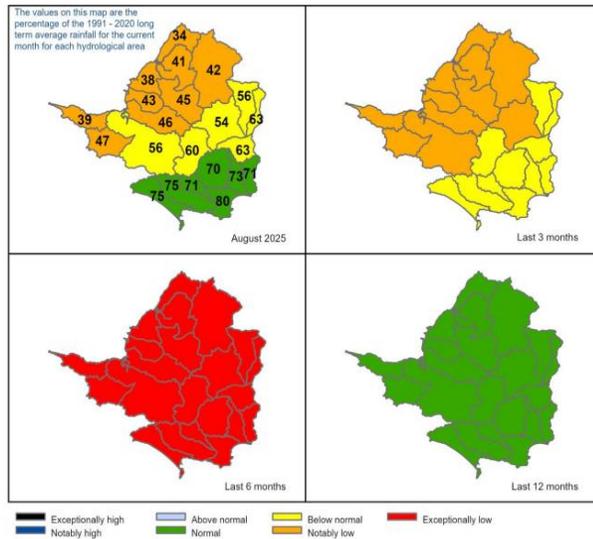
The Lynch



From very wet to very dry

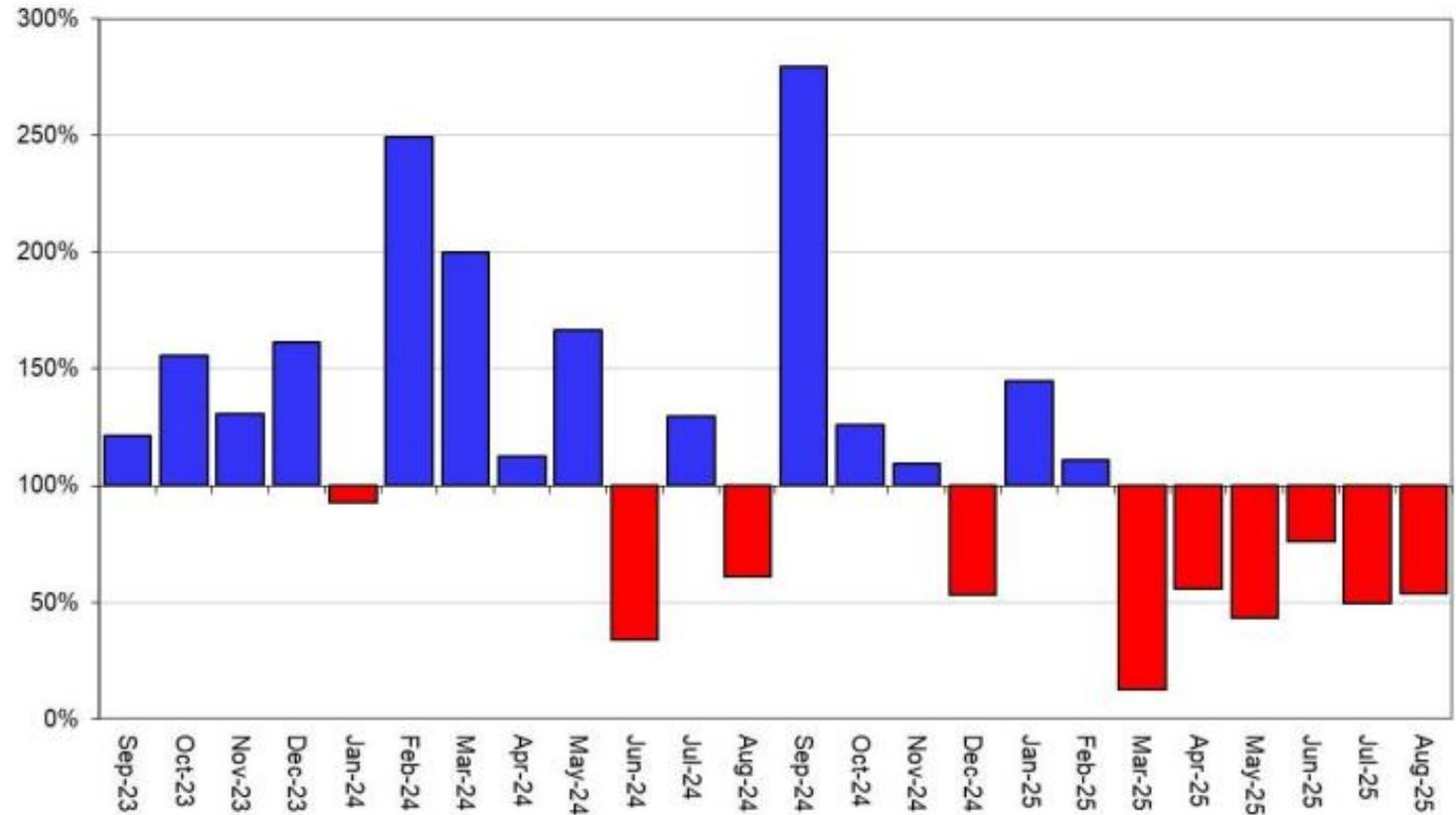


February 2024

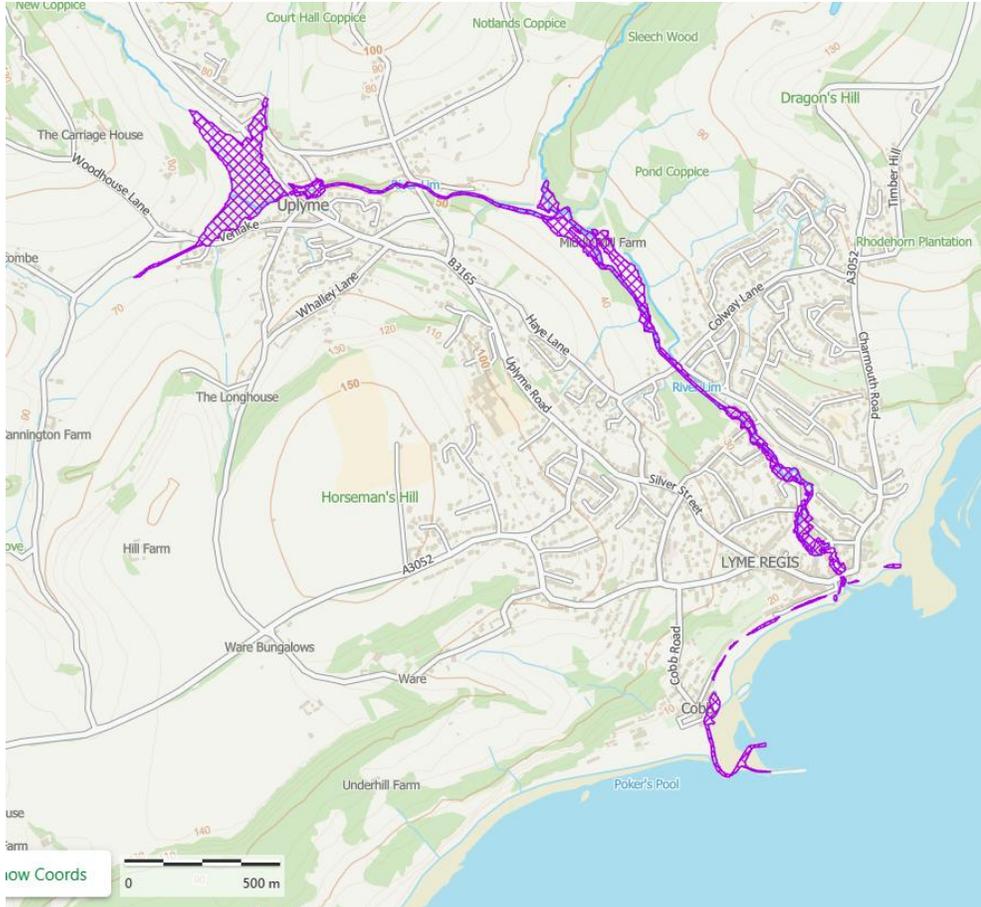


August 2025

1-Month Period for Wessex



Flood Warnings & Flood Resilience



<https://www.gov.uk/get-flood-warnings>

Useful links

<https://www.gov.uk/flood>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>

<http://www.gov.uk/permission-work-on-river-flood-sea-defence>

Questions?

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