

## Devils Brook and Cheselbourne Stream Project delivery in 2021

Observant people amongst the community around the Devils Brook and Cheselbourne Stream will have noticed that there has been progress in getting work done on the ground with the help of farmers in the catchment. FWAG SW advisers have been working with the Cheselbourne Stream Conservation Group and other members of the community to strategically locate trees and fencing to benefit the streams, as identified in the Wild Trout Trust report of 2019.

So far in 2020/21 the project has

- Planted 938 trees in small woods and 3600 hedging plants in fenced hedgerows that will intercept overland flows from farmland, tracks and roads. The roots of the trees open up channels into the soil increasing water infiltration by up to 60%, slowing run off from the land.
- Fenced livestock out of 159m of the Cheselbourne Stream and planted small blocks of woodlands to improve the riparian habitat and water quality.
- Fenced livestock out of 318m of the Devil's Brook on both banks to create a riverside wildlife corridor.
- Commissioned Peter Stone, a hydro geomorphologist, to identify opportunities to reconnect floodplains, reduce surface water flooding and so improve the streams.



The fabulous thing about getting things started on the ground is that it galvanises people to do their bit for the water environment. With funding raised by The Fox at Ansty last summer, Cheselbourne School has created a pond in their grounds to collect surface water. More land has been taken out of arable cultivation and put into grassland adjacent to the Cheselbourne stream. Extra hedges have been planted by landowners and wildflower margins will be created around the tree planting on the Cheselbourne Stream. Farmers have also independently contacted Catchment Sensitive Farming to get support to improve their farm tracks.

The work was funded by the EA through the Water Environment Improvement Fund. We also received support from Wessex Water through Dorset Wild Rivers. This in turn led the Tree Council to support the project, providing the trees through their Network Rail Community Tree Planting Initiative, with an ambitious target of planting a million trees nationally.

Latest news is that the combined efforts of the community mean that the EA are considering funding the project for another year. Plenty of projects that we could deliver in the future have come to light and we will redouble our efforts to keep the ball rolling in the chalk streams around Cheselbourne and Dewlish in the future. Your suggestions for projects are very welcome and there will be lots of opportunities for local volunteers to get involved once restrictions have been lifted; keep an eye on Cheselbourne Village News for updates.

Cheselbourne Parish Council has created a Riparian Owners Handbook which was delivered recently to all those in Cheselbourne who own land or property next to the stream. If you haven't received your copy, please contact [carolbyrom1@gmail.com](mailto:carolbyrom1@gmail.com) or ring 07855 147700.

FWAG SW would like to thank the various funders that have already been mentioned for their support. We would like to extend our warm thanks to the Stream Conservation Group in Cheselbourne and the following farmers who have provided their expertise, time, land, and enthusiasm to deliver the project outcomes this winter: Mark Boyden, James Shaw-Porter and Bernard Cox, Andrew Booth and Ian McKay, William and Anthony Earp, Justin Langham and John Collett.



Cheselbourne villagers send their gratitude to FWAG SW Advisers for all the hard work they have done to bring about improvements to our stream, to the funding groups and to the farmers for all their time and care.