



## COMMUNITY BRIEFING NOTE

### Ditch the Problem - Riparian Ownership

Following feedback received via Operation Watershed from community groups, particularly parishes, WSCC has updated some helpful information to guide landowners and community groups around the tricky subject of Riparian Ownership and Responsibilities.

Keeping our watercourses well maintained benefits the community as a whole. If an area experiences constant flooding, this becomes a nuisance to the community, can restrict access to property, makes everyday living difficult and results in considerable expense and inconvenience for those that have been flooded.

There are various resources including a short film, leaflet and posters as well as more detailed guidance that can be printed and used in your community.

You can find the updated resources here:

[www.westsussex.gov.uk/ditchtheproblem](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ditchtheproblem)

We do have a small amount of printed leaflets, if you would like some to circulate please contact Operation Watershed: [operation.watershed@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:operation.watershed@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Call to Action** As part of your ongoing work to support reducing the risk of flood impacting residents in your local area, continued communication is key to raising awareness. The new material will provide useful practical information and guidance for landowners and residents. When you have the opportunity please would you promote to your community groups and individuals in your area that information is available via the website.

### A little more information in case you are not familiar with Riparian Ownership...

If you have a watercourse, ditch, stream, river or culvert on or next to your land you are known as a 'riparian owner'. Riparian owners are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of watercourses on their land to ensure that they are not a flood risk to other people or property.

Well maintained watercourses can significantly benefit the local community by reducing flood risk and creating habitats for wildlife.

The riparian responsibilities for landowners under law are to:

- Ensure the flow of water is not obstructed or polluted
- Maintain the bottom and sides of the watercourse (including managing any trees and vegetation growing on the banks)
- Remove any obstructions, such as rubbish, fallen branches or garden waste
- Maintain any structures (such as trash screens, culverts, weirs and mill gates) on it.

It is important to promote and support communities to look after the watercourses in the county and this information will provide a helpful resource for them.

Further information is available via the website and if you have a particular question relating to Operation Watershed please go to:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/watershed>

Or email: [operation.watershed@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:operation.watershed@westsussex.gov.uk)

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