



Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council
ditch warden Robin Yeld

Ditch the problem

Managing flood risk in West Sussex involves both private landowners and local authorities and the county council works with its partners, countywide, to tackle the issue.

If you are a landowner and have a watercourse, ditch, stream, river or culvert on or next to your land you are a 'riparian owner' and you are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of watercourses on your land to prevent a flood risk to other people or properties.

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

An example of this is the case of Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council. It was the district-wide flooding back in 1994 that highlighted it had a collective role to play in the maintenance of its main ditches. The post of Parish Ditch Warden was created, based on the ancient post of a Lengthsman.

In subsequent years, the council undertook many drainage projects and the warden's role was extended to someone who could walk parish ditches on a regular basis, suggest potential improvement projects and undertake small maintenance jobs. It also had to be someone who knew the relevant landowners, so that everyone in the community felt involved and connected.

Warden Robin Yeld said: "The role seems to work very well, keeping the profile of drainage issues raised, keeping discussions about issues and ideas for improvements going and encouraging householders to clear small problem areas on their own."

Visit the website below for more information on riparian ownership and managing flood risk.



More information

• www.westsussex.gov.uk/ditchtheproblem

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