

The Douglas Catchment Partnership



Action Plan

April 2016



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“The challenge of improving our rivers, lakes, groundwater and coastal waters”

We’ve made great progress towards improving our water environment over the last 20 years, but more needs to be achieved, especially if we are to deal with the pressures of a changing climate and a growing population.

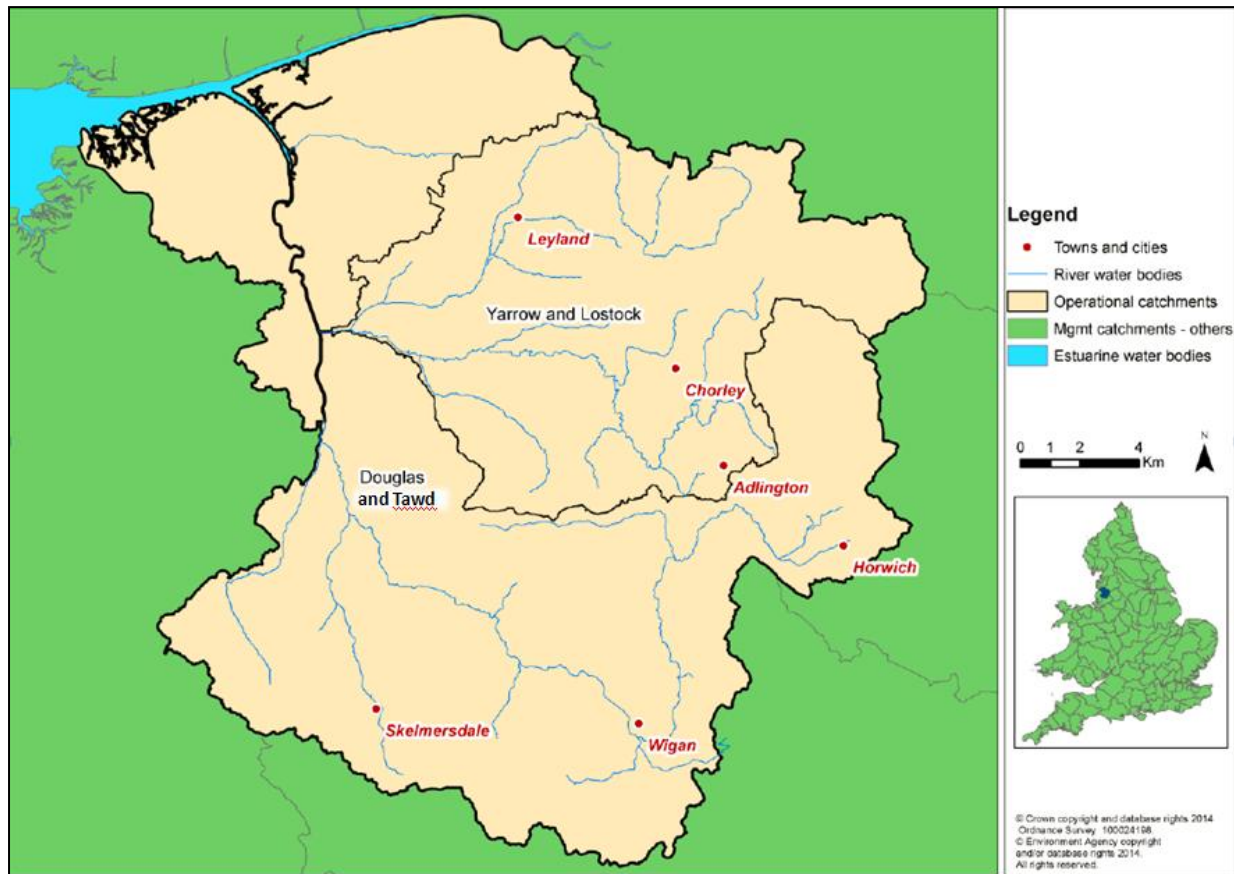
Under the Water Framework Directive, the UK has to ensure that there is no deterioration in the quality of our water bodies, and that all water bodies improve to reach ‘good ecological status’ as soon as possible. Although this is challenging to achieve, it makes us look at a range of issues in water bodies and how they interact, and this can only be good for the long term health of our rivers.

Each River Basin District across England has its own Plan, which outlines the main issues for the water environment and the actions that have been developed to tackle them. Key to achieving these ambitious plans is working in partnership across different organisations. By working together as the River Douglas Catchment Partnership we can improve river habitat, tackle pollution and work with communities, businesses, landowners, councils and farmers to ensure that we’re all taking our share of responsibility. Step by step we’re making a real difference and this document outlines our current activities across the catchment and our future plans for improving our water environment.



River Lostock, Cuerden Valley Park

River Douglas Catchment Overview

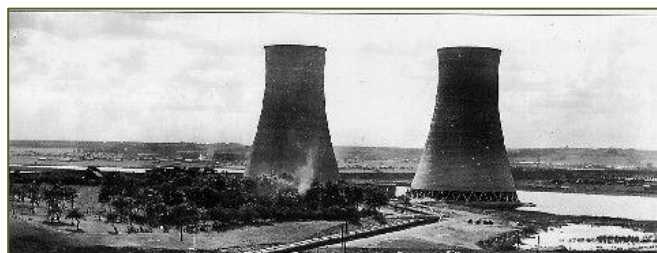


The River Douglas flows from Winter Hill, high on the West Pennine moors, through rural landscapes and urban sprawl until it meets the Ribble Estuary. From here, water from the catchment flows north and has the potential to impact the bathing waters of the Fylde Coast. The catchment area also contains many other significant local watercourses such as the River Lostock, River Yarrow, Carr Brook, Wynott Brook, River Tawd, the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, Wigan Flashes and Hesketh Marshes. In terms of urban conurbations Wigan is the most significant centre of population within this River Catchment.

In total there are fifteen river bodies and nine lakes (reservoirs) listed under the Water Framework Directive within the Douglas Catchment. Over 800,000 people live within the catchment area which is a vitally important water system covering 400km².

The history

In medieval times our river catchment was clean and fast flowing, ideal for corn mills. This all changed in the industrial revolution, when mining had a dramatic impact on water quality. Orange coloured drainage water discharged into the river, with one



Westwood Power Station in Wigan. Demolished in 1989

stream known locally as the ‘Yellow Brook’

Demand for the movement of coal increased, leading to the River Douglas being made navigable for cargo through the construction of locks, dams, and the straightening and widening of the river. Later this was made obsolete by the Leeds & Liverpool canal, but man’s interference with the river’s flow remains. The River Douglas is still a navigable river below Tarleton and forms an important part of the national waterways network, linking the Leeds & Liverpool Canal with the River Ribble and on to the Lancaster Canal.

Water quality today

Water quality varies within the catchment, from good on stretches of the River Yarrow to bad in places such as Poolstock Brook and Tara Carr Gutter.

The catchment faces many pressures. According to the Environment Agency the most significant sources of pressure are from urban and transport, the water industry and agricultural and rural land management sectors.

The most significant reason for failure is physical modifications – the River Douglas catchment has been particularly ill-served by man’s intervention in the forms of culverts, weirs and artificial banking etc.

The priority river basin management issues to tackle in this catchment are physical modifications, pollution from rural areas and pollution from urban sources, including waste water. Promoting community cohesion and empowering local people to take ownership of their environment is also very important to the partnership.



Farrington Weir, River Lostock

River Douglas Catchment Partnership

Our vision



'All water bodies of the River Douglas catchment will be clean and healthy, supporting abundant wildlife, valued by people and enabling sustainable economic growth.'

Our Key Objectives

- An agreed commitment from stakeholders to consider the above aim when planning and carrying out physical work, activities and community engagement within the Douglas Catchment area.
- Identification of funding opportunities to create a sustainable legacy for the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA).
- Development of targeted PR campaigns which raise awareness of local communities and business about the CaBA including the essential role that everyone could play in improving our water environment.
- Partnership working with other River Catchment Hosts across the North West of England to share best practise and build resilient delivery models which cross boundaries.
- Timely sharing of knowledge, best practise and information between all Douglas Catchment Partnership members to ensure that the action plan is well coordinated.
- Effective and timely sharing of knowledge and engagement opportunities with local communities and special interest groups with a focus on empowering young people as ambassadors for change.



Skelmersdale school children cleaning up the River Tawd

- Promotion of the @DouglasPilot twitter feed as the 'hub' for public engagement with news about the River Douglas and its associated waterways.
- Identification of organisations, business, communities that are not yet engaged in or aware of the River Douglas Catchment Based Approach with the key aim of increasing audiences to learn, understand and engage in shaping the future of our waterways.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the River Douglas Partnership to ensure that the overarching aims and objectives are met.

Priorities

- Take action towards meeting EU Water Framework Directive by 2027 and other regulatory drivers, including the revised Bathing Water Directive.
- Develop a programme of collaborative work among catchment partners that is informed by good local evidence and brings lasting benefits to the water environment
- Maximise resources and where possible bring in additional funding towards the costs of delivery
- Increase participation and ownership of water environment issues at a local level, by encouraging engagement community, education and business sectors.



River Chor aqueduct near Chorley

Current Project Case Studies

YARROW INVASIVE NON-NATIVE (INNS) PROJECT 2016-17

The Lancashire Wildlife Trust became involved in the Douglas Catchment Partnership because issues and opportunities for both biodiversity and people exist from source to sea and need to be addressed throughout the catchment by stakeholders and partners working together. Public consultation raised INNS as a major issue and the Wildlife Trust volunteered to be the lead partner for INNS in the Catchment Action Plan. The Trust successfully applied to Veolia Environmental Trust for funding (£34,450) to tackle INNS in the Yarrow catchment. Match-funding provided by Chorley Borough Council (£4000) and the Environment Agency (£8000) has made the project viable and this demonstrates the benefit of partners working together to common goals and vision. Between May 2016 and August 2017, the Wildlife Trust will employ a project officer, who will work in partnership with the Canal and River Trust, Chorley Borough Council, Cuerden Valley Park Trust, South Ribble Borough Council, United Utilities, the Woodland Trust, private landowners, Friends of groups, local communities and other volunteers. There will be a coordinated effort to tackle Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron at Wildlife Sites and interconnecting corridors throughout the catchment. Volunteers will receive training in balsam 'bashing' by hand-pulling and use of weed slashers, stem injection for treating knotweed and the 'lever and mulch' technique for removing Rhododendron and the funding will also bring in contractors to tackle heavy infestations of INNS and will buy tools and equipment for the Friends of groups to keep up the good work after 2017.

"Invasive species are spreading and the cost of dealing with the problem is increasing at a time when government funding is being cut, but in the Yarrow catchment at least, not only have we got a chance to get on top of the problem, we will be reseeding some areas that have been cleared of balsam with a native wetland wildflower seed mix so that people will be able to see the benefit of all the hard work. It is important that volunteers are rewarded and motivated enough to keep on top of the INNS in the future, hence we will also be looking at ways of making balsam bashing enjoyable and fun. The project will raise awareness of the problems with INNS to private landowners and other community groups throughout the catchment and encourage them to do their bit too."

John Lamb, Senior Conservation Officer, Lancashire Wildlife Trust



LOVE MY RIVER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Love My River – The Chor and Yarrow



Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside started the 'Love My River' Project in Chorley in partnership with United Utilities, Chorley Council and the Environment Agency.

Funded by the United Utilities Catchment Wise initiative, the project focussed on Astley Park and the two rivers to Yarrow Valley Country Park.

The aim of the project was to recruit a team of volunteers to undertake 'River Walkovers' along the River Chor, Clancutt Brook and River Yarrow. This was to provide the Environment Agency and Chorley Council with further information about potential sources of pollution and other water quality issues in the River Chor and Yarrow.

We delivered a programme of walkovers and water quality surveys, with volunteers. We also undertook small scale projects along the water bodies which volunteers were able to undertake to improve water quality. For example INNS (Invasive Non Native Species) removal and habitat management works along the river. Altogether, nearly 13km of river was protected or improved.

Rubbish and litter was removed from both rivers. Working with partners from the 'Douglas Catchment Partnership', local businesses (adjacent to the river) and the volunteer team, we had a 'Big Clean Up Day' to remove rubbish and litter from the river.

During 465 hours of donated time, volunteers - members of the general public, students and 'Friends of Astley Park' - gained a wider understanding of sources of urban pollution to water bodies and actions they can take to reduce or prevent pollution. Since the extensive training and surveying the volunteers now continue to monitor the River Chor.



“The data that produced by these walkover surveys is invaluable in helping us monitor the condition of waterways in the catchment. It also helps us to plan our investment in the area and make sure that we are tackling those issues that are most important to local communities. United Utilities are proud to be associated with Love My River and the partners that this project has brought together.”

Claire Mallard, Asset Manager, United Utilities

Love My River- Tawd



After the success of phase 1 of Love My River, the project moved to Skelmersdale and the River Tawd. This is in partnership with Environment Agency and West Lancashire Ranger Service.

Once again, the aim of the project is to recruit a team of volunteers to undertake 'River Walkovers' along the River Tawd. The project officer will report back to the Environment Agency and the Ranger Service with information about potential sources of pollution and other water quality issues in the River.

Another 'Clean Up Day' was arranged and heavily advertised to attract volunteers from the local community. This event was a huge success with 36 people attending, including two schools. Removed from the river were 90+ bags of rubbish, 35 shopping trolleys and a selection of bikes, wheel chairs and metal piping. An organisation called 'Trolleywise' came and removed all the trolleys for repatriation or recycling.



Working with students over the summer, Himalayan Balsam (INNS) management was undertaken, large areas were removed. The next step is to get local volunteers to go out for the next few years removing until eradicating the unwanted species.

Members of the local community are keen to get started in delivering a programme of walkovers and water quality surveys; the training is due to start at the end of October.

In the future, we would like to take part in some 'Citizen Science' working with local schools and colleges. For example a study led by David Lerner, a professor of environmental engineering at the University of Sheffield, found that tampons absorb tiny amounts of 'brighteners' found in detergents, toothpaste and shampoos will glow under UV lights. The Professor said: "Sewage in rivers is very unpleasant, very widespread and very difficult to track down. Our new method may be unconventional, but it's cheap and it works." We could use this to track down where pollutants are coming from at river locations.

"Working with the partners from the 'Douglas Catchment' really enhanced the work, having expert advice and support on hand from the members helped immensely. Small scale projects, like Love My River, couldn't take place if it wasn't for the help and support from organisations and agencies, who are members of the Douglas Catchment Partnership, access to their expertise and local knowledge is paramount for the project's success."

Pauline Taylor, Senior Ecological Officer , Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside

"It was a pleasure to take part in the river clean up as it provided me with great satisfaction to see how much of a difference a few hours of my time can make. Organisation of the event was great and everyone pulled together to work as part of a team. I really enjoyed the physical aspect of the work and can't wait to get involved again next week!"

Paul Burgess, Love My River Tawd Volunteer

"I'd like to pass on The Ranger Services thanks for running a wonderful clean-up day last Friday. The event was an overwhelming success and a wonderful example of partnership working at its best. The tally of picked bags and shopping trolleys was astounding. Thank you so very much for your involvement and hard work"

Dan Massey, Head Ranger, West Lancashire Borough Council

RIVER CHOR REEDBED

Following on from the 'Love My River' project on the Chor, the Friends of Astley Park had the idea of creating a reed bed to help improve the water quality of the river as it flows into the park.

The Friends of Astley Park worked in partnership with Chorley Council, the Environment Agency, Highways England, Groundwork and Lancashire Wildlife Trust to carry out research, undertake ecological surveys, draw up a scheme design, gain permissions and secure funding.

The project will create a new river channel at the Park Road end of the park which will divert the existing river through a ¼ hectare of wet reed bed planted with *Typha angustifolia* and *Phragmites australis* which remove pollutants from the water.

This will in turn improve the biodiversity of the whole area through native woodland, wetland and meadow wildflower planting, tree planting and the installation of rock ramps which will help oxygenate the water whilst still enabling fish to pass up through the scheme.

The River Chor is a valued feature of the park so all partners felt that it was important to tackle pollution and improve the habitat, with the introduction of a reed bed making a real contribution towards this goal.

The project will also improve public access to the town centre end of the park by formalising 'desire line' paths with surfaced stone paths, building steps into the steep wooded valley sides and formalising a bridge over the river.

Work started in January 2016 with the felling of a few trees to make way for the new reed bed which will be a wildlife-only zone, and the whole project is expected to be completed in Summer 2016.



As well as improving the water quality and public access, the project will also improve the look of the park and it is proposed to install interpretation boards to tell people about the project, site history, flora and fauna.

The main grant, of over £13,100, to enable the works was received via the Friends of Astley Park through Lancashire Environmental Fund with additional funding of £8000 from the Environment Agency, £5000 from Chorley Council and £4,000 from Highways England.

“We investigated the reasons as to why there was little plant and fish life in the river and we found many historical problems that attempting to do anything about, would be nigh on impossible. So we came up with the idea of a reed bed. I, as a keen fisherman, was aware of the effectiveness of reed beds but we had scant knowledge of how to go about it. But then we researched it and put our idea to the council, sourced the grants and now we’re expecting work to start in spring.”

Steve Rhodes, chair of the Friends of Astley Park



“We’re proud to have been involved right from the start in this partnership to improve the quality of the water courses in Chorley because of the importance of the Rivers Chor and Yarrow to the parks and countryside within our borough.

“By working closely with different organisations, communities, businesses and landowners, we’ve been able to share experiences, knowledge and resources to achieve our common goals towards tackling pollution and improving river habitat. We’ve delivered river walk over training and river clean ups, supported the Friends of Astley Park to work up a reed bed project and gained external funding to improve the River Chor. We’re also planning improvement projects on the River Yarrow as part of the flood defence initiative for Croston.

“We’re proud to be part of this very strong partnership which works well together to make a real difference and will continue to do so as we go forward with our ambitious action plans to tackle pollution and improve river habitat.”

Councillor Bev Murray, Chorley Council executive member with responsibility for parks and open spaces.

RIVER YARROW VISION AND CROSTON FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME ENHANCEMENTS

Alongside the Croston Flood Alleviation construction work (see 'Links to other projects and initiatives below'), there is a programme of enhancement works to the River Yarrow aimed at improving the habitat, further reducing flood risk, reducing diffuse pollution of the river from agricultural sources and providing opportunities for education. This work also has strong connections to the Yarrow Invasive Non-native Species project.

With the valued support of landowners, a partnership between the Environment Agency, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Chorley Council have delivered important outcomes such as:

- Creation of 3 hectares of habitat, including floodplain grazing marsh, wetland, ponds and wet woodland.
- Restoration of 2 km of the River Yarrow, including bank stabilisation, installation of woody debris and control of invasive species.
- Installation of 500m of fencing to exclude livestock from the river, reducing erosion and diffuse pollution.
- Opportunities for local school children to visit the site and learn about the importance of the flood scheme and the wildlife present in the river, as well as sowing some wildflower seeds.



A workshop was held with a wide range of partners and local stakeholders in February 2015, to gather information and ideas for a 10 Year Vision for the River Yarrow. Ideas ranged from improving access and promoting recreation around the river for health; to utilising the environment in the Yarrow Valley for community food production. We will build on this Vision and take opportunities to deliver improvements for environmental, social, economic and health benefits for local people.

To add detail to some of the ideas, a scoping study has been completed, primarily to identify opportunities for natural flood risk reduction opportunities both upstream and downstream of the Croston Flood Scheme. This has identified an extensive area of land which has high potential for river restoration, rewetting, wet woodland creation, in channel improvements and opportunities for reconnecting the river to its flood plain. This could also provide huge benefits for habitat creation and water quality as well as being a valuable recreational resource for the public.



“The enhancement work around the Croston Flood Scheme site in Ecclestone has kick started some really great work on the Yarrow. Strong partnerships are forming between partners like the Environment Agency, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Chorley Council and the support of landowners has been invaluable.

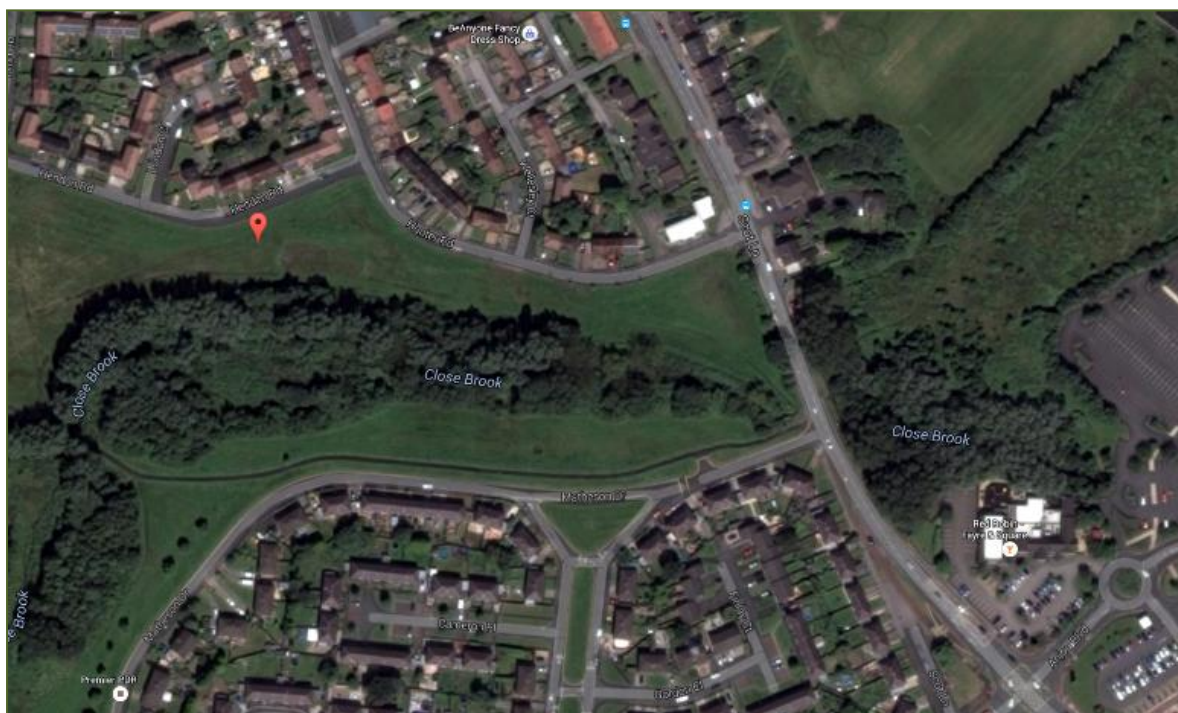
“It’s really important for us, as a partnership, to understand the wide range of social, economic and health benefits that can come from a better environment. This case study only shows the tip of the iceberg of what can be achieved when a wide range of partners work together.”

Helen Dix, Catchment Co-ordinator, Environment Agency

CLOSE BROOK (CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP ACTION FUND)

Many part of the Douglas Catchment suffer from the impacts of urban diffuse pollution and modifications to the river channels. Using Defra funding under the Catchment Partnership Action Fund, Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside, in partnership with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and with the support of Wigan Council, are delivering a project to help address this on Close Brook a tributary of the River Douglas.

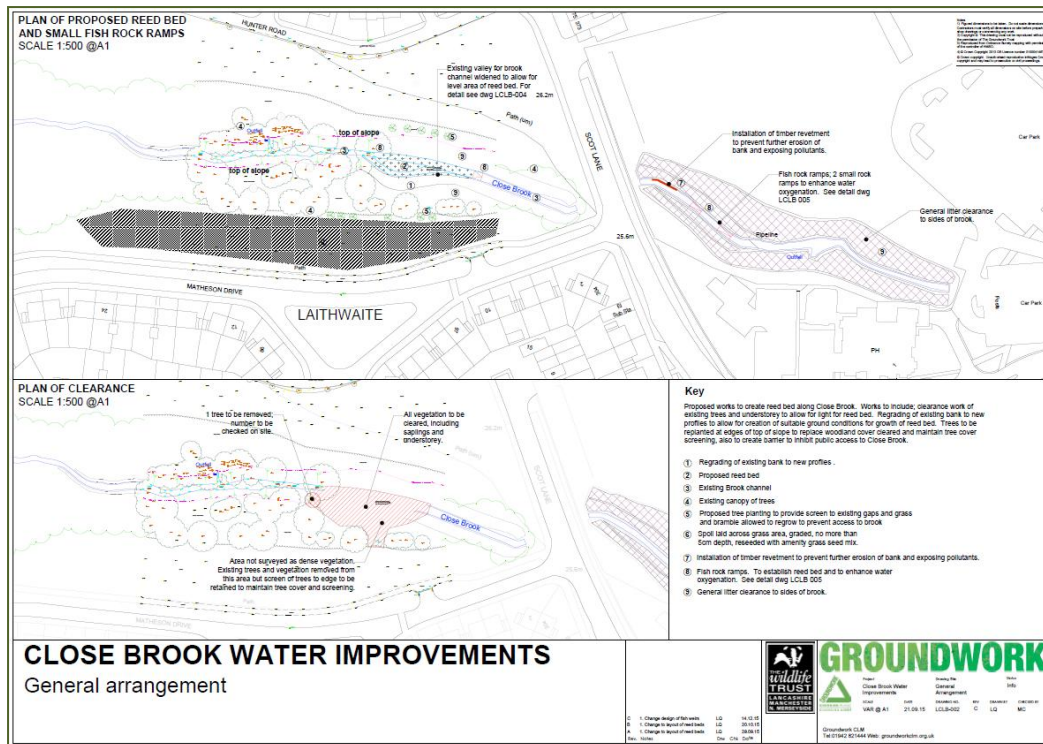
Close Brook takes drainage from several housing estates and three combined sewer overflows. Whilst one of these overflows was considerably improved by United Utilities in 2014, there is still intermittent pollution from misconnected properties and the other two overflows. Closer to the confluence with the River Douglas, Close Brook is in danger of eroding into an historic landfill site, posing a risk of release of leachate.



The project will install a reed bed in an area downstream of the misconnections and sewer overflows. Reeds are known for their ability to break down organic pollution and improve water quality. The reed for this project will be harvested from existing sites nearby. Railway sleepers will be used to protect the banks of the brook adjacent to the landfill and protect them from any further erosion. Volunteers will give the brook a general clean up to remove litter which has collected in the area over many years. Small steps will be placed in the river to oxygenate the water and improve conditions for aquatic life.

This work will reduce urban diffuse pollution in Close Brook and accordingly in the River Douglas, reducing the concentration of pollutants such as phosphates which are present in detergents. It will also provide better habitats for aquatic wildlife.

The planning work is now complete and work started on site in January 2016 and will be completed by April 2016.



"Being a part of the Douglas Catchment Partnership is important to Groundwork. Being able to see where our work fits in to a larger plan and the plans of the other partners helps us to chose projects that will have maximum impact and that will complement the actions of others. Engaging with this partnership helps us to achieve our vision of building more sustainable communities in our operational area and the Close Brook project is one way in which we achieve our vision alongside many of the other key partners in the partnership. One of the strengths of the partnership which we value is the fact that there are local people and experts from many fields involved. This diversity gives us even more confidence that all aspects of the work to be undertaken have been considered. At Close Brook, thanks to everyone's input, we have evolved a design which considers the various needs and pressures on this stretch of water and will result in the best possible intervention that will improve and enhance our environment."

Peter Herberlet, Programme Director Land, Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside

"Wigan Council has been fully engaged and involved in the development of the catchment partnership from its inception and support it wholeheartedly. The partnership brings together a wide range of stakeholders to identify and understand the nature of different planning pressures such as for farming, recreation, flood risk and biodiversity, and a host of issues affecting our landscapes and catchments. This multi-sector approach helps connect local plans with national priorities to afford better protection of our landscapes and develop plans that take into account their effect on the wider ecosystem. We are delighted to support the Catchment Partnership in this way to find innovative and sustainable interventions that have local ownership and commitment based on an allocation of available resources and an over-arching catchment plan that identifies what needs to be done and what the outcomes will be."

Martin Purcell, Greenheart Project Manager, Wigan Council

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) is a Defra project delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency and Natural England, working with the farming community to identify and reduce the risk of pollution to water from sediment, pesticide and nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous). This is termed as Diffuse Water Pollution from Agriculture (DWPA) as often the source of an issue is not always clear due to extended timescales of the impact upon a water course. A key aim is to help reduce the risk of Bathing Water failures, this is key to our work in the North West and throughout England.

Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers are trained to recognise opportunities to support farmers to increase the efficiency of their business and reduce their impact on the environment. Activities promoted by CSF include soil sampling to assess the soil pH and nutrient levels; and nutrient management planning to better match manure and fertiliser use to the crop. Improvements to manure and slurry storage infrastructure can also be supported through the project. Examples include roofing a manure or slurry store to exclude water access; or ensuring clean and dirty water is separated as it runs off the farmyard.

The benefits of roofing a manure store are better storage period, better quality manure, manure applied at a time of year when it can be utilised in the best possible manner by the grass crop with reduced risk of nutrient loss due to rainfall, and leaching to the water course. Across most of the Douglas Catchment, manure and slurry which leaches into water can also have an impact on the beaches of the Lancashire Coast. Better management and use of organic fertilisers prevent Faecal Indicator Organisms entering water and potentially causing these Bathing Waters to fall below the required standards. Overall there are both economic benefits for the farm and environmental benefits.



“The River Douglas Catchment has the support of many sectors; Catchment Sensitive Farming contributes by working specifically with the agricultural sector. CSF engages with farmers and land managers by non regulatory means by offering advice supported by a range of reports which can be produced specific to individual farms. CSF promotes the objectives of the new Countryside Stewardship for Higher Tier and Mid Tier and the delivery of Water Grants which are aimed at reducing pollution risk. CSF looks on its catchments on a risk based approach and targets its work to those areas of higher risk to causing DWPA. CSF also works in the Crossens and Ribble which border the Douglas Catchment.”

Michael Graham, Catchment Sensitive Farming Lead Advisor, Natural England.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORK ON UPPER RIVER DOUGLAS

A section of land running between Wigan Lane and an historic industrial estate on Leyland Mill Lane was acquired in 2010. This included protected woodland and several hundred yards of the right bank of the River Douglas. The area provides a haven for wildlife, with buzzards, kestrels, sparrow hawks, kingfishers, nuthatches, tree creepers, dippers and numerous other bird species breeding on the property. Mammals breeding locally include roe deer, foxes, badgers, rabbits, stoats, weasels and moles.

This section of river has previously been straightened and, consequently, much of the original diversity in current speed, depth and substrate composition has been lost. Although baseline “day to day” water quality is good enough to support invertebrate species that are relatively sensitive to organic (and other) pollution – the section has been prone to short lived but very severe episodic pollution incidents.

In order to improve the habitat, the landowner and local volunteers worked with the Wild Trout Trust to introduce securely anchored woody debris to the channel. This provided benefits including refuge for juvenile fish from predation and adult fish to improve the chances of successful breeding.



After two winters and numerous spates, the benefit of the work is clearly apparent with narrowing of some channels due to deposition caused by the large woody debris, providing new refuges for juvenile fish and new habitat created for invertebrates. All of the structures were still in place by the start of winter 2015.

Other improvements at this location include sediment clearance of gravel beds – an important breeding ground for fish; management of invasive species; rubbish collection and river invertebrate monitoring.

Future improvements to the river in the area will hopefully include installation of in stream deflectors to help to further scour the river bed in appropriate places; possible introduction of supplementary spawning gravels if suitable locations can be identified; fixing of bank side ‘brash’ to help alleviate erosion problems and ‘silting up’ (infiltration) of spawning gravels; fencing off livestock from the river bank to minimize erosion; and selective grazing to control invasive species.

Baseline water quality is now greatly improved – with the main threat to aquatic life now coming from episodic pollution incidents. Reducing the frequency and magnitude of those pollution events, along with reduced sediment inputs, will enable the potential of this habitat to be realized.

“With help from the relevant authorities, the input of the local community and careful management, the upper Douglas valley could become an outstanding wildlife habitat. The help we have received from the Wild Trout Trust has been excellent and we look forward to achieving more in this area in the future.”

Paul Kenyon, Landowner and Angler

"The Wild Trout Trust, exists to provide technical expertise and guidance to anyone who would like to protect and improve their local trout stream. With partners who are as passionate as Paul Kenyon fighting for his section of the River Douglas in Wigan, we will continue to make great strides in achieving healthy river corridors that are rich in wildlife and plants in both urban and rural settings. We are proud to be a core member of the River Douglas "Catchment Based Approach" partnership and we look forward to our future joint successes. You can find out more about us at www.wildtrout.org"

Paul Gaskell, Wild Trout Trust



CORPORATE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – UNITED UTILITIES AND TAWD VALLEY PARK

In June 2015, 47 volunteers from United Utilities worked with West Lancashire Borough Council Rangers to help clean up at the Summer Street area of Tawd Valley Park as part of a Corporate and Social Responsibility and team building day.

The event was organised between the West Lancashire Borough Council Ranger Service, United Utilities and The River Douglas Catchment Partnership.

In one morning the group cleared 10 trolleys, four bikes including an exercise bike, and a large garden table out of the River Tawd near Summer Street. They also took away a number of tyres as well as discarded clothes and a duvet out of the river near Summer Street. Together with the rangers, the volunteers crafted eight wooden benches, rebuilt a long flight of steps and cleared away eight bags of rubbish from the ground by the river. They also cleared Himalayan Balsam, a plant that is choking out our native flora, away from the whole area that was allocated for the volunteer work.



“The Tawd Valley Park is a lovely area and it is a real shame that a small minority spoil it by leaving rubbish here. The volunteers have done some great work clearing up this area and they can be really proud of their efforts as they have made a real difference here.”

Councillor Yvonne Gagen, portfolio holder for Leisure at West Lancashire Borough Council

“This conservation day on the River Tawd was arranged through the CatchmentWise initiative, and the staff from at United Utilities were happy to contribute towards making a really positive change to the environment in this area.”

Jonathan Culf, Wastewater Strategy Team, United Utilities

FYLDE LOVEmyBEACH

LOVEmyBEACH is a campaign with a huge challenge, to work together to keep our North West beaches and bathing waters clean. You don't have to live by the sea to make a difference – wherever you live, work, or visit in the North West, please support LOVEmyBEACH.

In Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre LOVEmyBEACH works with community groups who go out regularly to clean the beach and look after their local environment. There are three groups in Fylde who litter pick their stretch of beach every week, and three groups in Wyre who go out monthly, collecting thousands of bags of rubbish over the years they have been doing this. Not only does this directly improve the local environment, it also removes harmful substances from the sea and helps protect wildlife.



Additionally, LOVEmyBEACH volunteers are great advocates for cleaner seas – encouraging everyone to do their bit to reduce blockages in the drains and pollution getting into the sea.

We people to understand that what you put down the drains and toilets can have a big impact on the environment so we are asking everybody to bin used cooking fats rather than pouring them down the sink and bin disposable wipes and sanitary items which can sometimes end up in the toilet and cause blockages in the pipes. At times of heavy rain these blockages can result in the sewers overflowing, causing pollution to end up in the rivers and sea and affecting water quality.

To raise awareness of these issues LOVEmyBEACH has an education pack for schools and groups, a business pack so businesses can show their support, and lots more resources on the website

www.lovemybeach.org



“Being part of the Douglas catchment partnership is really important to Fylde LOVEmyBEACH as what goes into the river eventually ends up at the sea, and we are particularly concerned with bathing water quality. There are eight bathing waters on the Fylde coast, defined as spots where most people come to use the beach and swim and paddle. The Environment Agency monitor the water quality at these sites through the summer so we know the levels of bacteria in the water and whether it's safe to swim. We are very glad that seven out of the eight bathing waters passed new, tougher standards in 2015 and we can be proud of our beaches and bathing waters.”

However, there is still work to be done to continually improve water quality at the coast, and this involves working together. For people living and working in the River Douglas catchment this is particularly important, as the Douglas flows into the River Ribble which flows into the Irish Sea and transports materials up the Fylde coast. So whether it's pollution from farming or households, this can affect water quality, which both rivers and seas have targets to achieve.

The LOVEmyBEACH top 10 tips include binning used cooking fats and any disposable items in the bathroom, going on a litter pick, picking up your dog's mess and checking that your drains are connected right, all of which will help keep the water in rivers and seas clean and a better environment for everyone.”

Emma Whitlock, Fylde BeachCare Officer

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE FARMED ENVIRONMENT

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment is a partnership approach that helps farmers and landowners by signposting to best practice in soil, water and nutrient management alongside enhancing the farmed environment for biodiversity. The CFE demonstrates how the industry takes responsibility for addressing environmental issues alongside profitable farming.

The CFE is an industry led initiative and is supported by organisations engaged in agriculture and the environment, such as the National Farmers Union, Country Land Association, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB alongside other voluntary industry-led initiatives (Greenhouse Gas Action Plan, Tried & Tested and The Voluntary Initiative).



The CFE supports farmers through on farm events and workshops, through guidance and by promoting a series of voluntarily environmental measures. The campaign promotes using the right environmental measure, in the right place.

At a regional level the CFE, works to provide this guidance directly to farmers and landowners through events; however through the breadth of the partnership the CFE helps facilitate partnership and streamlined delivery of best practice farm management messaging to farmers.

River Douglas Catchment and the CFE

The CFE have worked with the River Douglas Catchment to help promote best practice to farmers and help decrease

water pollution through farming activities. By working together good soil water and nutrient management can be better communicated to farmers and landowners.

“The CFE are really pleased to work with the River Douglas Catchment partnership. Through joint working, farmers can get the right messages about water quality from experienced and specialised advisers. The CFE looks forward to continued working with the River Douglas Catchment, making sure that land management responses to the asks of the Water Framework Directive.”

CFE Project Officer, Bethan Williams

Links to other projects and initiatives

RIVINGTON TERRACED GARDENS

Rivington Terraced Gardens, on the slopes of Rivington Pike at the head of the Douglas Catchment, were originally created for soap magnate Lord Leverhulme as a spectacular venue for him to relax in and entertain. A Heritage Lottery Funded Project to conserve and revitalise the gardens is currently being developed by Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside.

As part of the project, a pilot activity involved school children tracing water flowing from the tennis courts in the gardens, through the Japanese Lake and the Cascade and down towards the reservoirs that provide water for people in the Douglas Catchment and beyond.

It is hoped that much more of this type of activity will be enabled by the progression of the project into the delivery phase – an aspirational £3.3M programme of work to stabilise and consolidate the structures within the Gardens and improve access, so that they can be enjoyed by generations to come.



"Rivers have played a huge part in shaping the heritage of the area, and visiting Rivington is a fantastic way of connecting people, particularly younger audiences, with this heritage. We can see where one of the tributaries that feeds the Douglas breaks ground, and follow it through the Gardens' water features. And there's no better place than the Pigeon Tower, to see and understand the reservoir complex and how vital this landscape is to the region's water supply."

Ben Williams, Project Manager, Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside.

CROSTON FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME

Croston has a long history of flooding. Most recently, on Boxing Day 2015, Croston attracted national attention when hundreds of homes were flooded by the River Yarrow.

Croston is located on the River Yarrow, just upstream from where it meets the Rivers Lostock and Douglas. This meeting of rivers, combined with a series of culverted (underground) watercourses, drains, sewers and surface water runoff, means that the area has been flooded several times.

Construction of a flood storage basin upstream of Eccleston Bridge on the River Yarrow commenced in January



2015. The scheme will cost around £5M and will reduce the amount of water that flows through the town when the rivers are in flood reducing the flood risk to almost 420 local homes and businesses.

“The Environment Agency has worked closely with United Utilities, Chorley Council, Lancashire County Council and the Lower Yarrow Flood Action Group to develop the plans for the flood alleviation scheme. In addition, the residents of Croston have been very active and have been trained to use a pump which will reduce the risk to properties during a flood. It’s not always possible to prevent flooding, but this scheme will significantly reduce the risk to more than 400 properties in Croston.”

Jonathon Croft, Senior Flood Risk Advisor, Environment Agency

Future aims of the River Douglas Catchment Partnership

With additional funding even more could be achieved. The following projects and outcomes could be realised with additional partnership funding.

- Action to support Catchment Sensitive Farming on the whole catchment. This would provide improvements for rural diffuse pollution and habitat.
- Build on the innovative approach to community-led development of sustainable drainage systems, including wetlands and use of trees to provide improvements for water quality, habitat, flood risk and amenity value e.g. edible rain gardens.
- Action to implement the River Yarrow Vision as developed by the existing stakeholder group. Actions will improve water quality, habitat, recreation, education, and a host of further economic, social and environmental drivers.
- Develop a cohesive infrastructure of support services which enable business, farmers, community groups, the voluntary and the public sector to have access to and benefit from the best practice advice in relation to the water environment.
- Develop our links to academic institutions to improve our understanding of the catchment and the future improvements that are needed.



Love My River Chor Volunteers

River Douglas Catchment Partnership Action Plan Summary

<u>Name</u>	<u>Partners</u>	<u>Sub - Catchment</u>	<u>Local Authority area</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Timeframes for Delivery</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
Catchment Hosting	Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside	Douglas Yarrow, Tawd, Lostock	Wigan, Chorley, Bolton, West Lancs, South Ribble	Facilitation of consortia to enable partners to work collectively to improve water quality across this catchment in line with the Water Framework Objective.	To bring the right stakeholders together to create a focused, sustainable and collective partnership to ensure that the water environment within the River Douglas Catchment is improved into the future.	To facilitate good clear communications between stakeholders which build on shared best practise and increases opportunities to access joint finance to improve the water environment.	2014 to 2025	LIFE Integrated Partnership Catchment Partnership Action Fund
Catchment Sensitive Farming	Natural England Environment Agency Landowners Farmers Farming organisations including the National Farmers Union	Douglas, Yarrow, Tawd, Lostock,	Wigan, Bolton, West Lancs	An initiative to work with farmers & land managers to help ensure agricultural land is managed with the health of the catchment in mind.	To tackle environmental challenges, including pollution of rivers, lakes and bathing waters on agricultural land, through improving land management practices.	Reduce the source, pathways and impact of pollution from infrastructure, fields, and pesticide handling areas. Reduce the losses of sediment, nutrients and chemicals from agriculture.	2014 - 2021	DEFRA funded project for advice & grant funding Countryside Stewardship
Croston Flood Alleviation Scheme	Environment Agency Chorley Council	Yarrow	Chorley	Construction of a flood storage basin to reduce the flood risk to properties from the River Yarrow	Reduce the risk of flooding to 420 properties in the village of Croston. Improve habitat, water quality and education	Construction of a flood storage basin near Eccleston with associated improvements to the local environment.	April 2015 – May 2016	Environment Agency Chorley Council

<u>Name</u>	<u>Partners</u>	<u>Sub - Catchment</u>	<u>Local Authority area</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Timeframes for Delivery</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
	Lancashire Wildlife Trust				opportunities related to the River Yarrow.	Further measures to reduce flood risk for local communities.		United Utilities
River Chor Reedbed	Chorley Council Groundwork CLM Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside Environment Agency Highways England	River Chor	Chorley	To create a reed bed in the River Chor within Astley Park	To improve the water quality of the river and consequently the catchment and to improve the biodiversity of the park and river corridor	To work in partnership to implement the master plan for the reed bed scheme and secure on-going maintenance using volunteers. To raise public awareness, love and knowledge of the river Chor and catchment.	Jan-September 2016	Lancashire Environment Fund Chorley Council Highways England Environment Agency
Love My River	Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside	River Chor River Tawd Douglas Upper Catchment-wide	Chorley West Lancs Wigan South Ribble Bolton	A project that aims to educate future generations about what they can do to reduce water pollution and improve the health of our Rivers.	To educate local communities about the need to respect and look after our Rivers into the future To work closely with existing campaigns to bring about behaviour change which improves water quality, eg: What not to Flush and	Development of a fun, community –based citizen science project to give people practical skills to reduce water pollution and improve the health of our Rivers Educate people about misconceptions , what not to flush and LOVEmyBEACH.	April 2014 – on-going	United Utilities (2014-15) Environment Agency

<u>Name</u>	<u>Partners</u>	<u>Sub - Catchment</u>	<u>Local Authority area</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Timeframes for Delivery</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
					Connect Right (both United Utilities initiatives).	Help communities develop action plans for their local rivers.		
Manage and reduce Invasive Non-Native Species	Lancashire Wildlife Trust	Yarrow Catchment-wide	Chorley Wigan West Lancs Bolton South Ribble	Development and delivery of a catchment-wide Action Plan to tackle Non-Native Invasive Species	To assess the effects of Non-native Species across the catchment and deliver measures to manage their environmental impact on water.	Development of Catchment-wide INNS Action Plan. Delivery of pilot project on River Yarrow catchment. Develop a co-ordinated partnership approach to raising awareness, surveying and controlling INNS across the catchment	May 2016 and August 2017,	Veolia Environmental Trust Chorley Borough Council Environment Agency
The Yarrow Vision	Environment Agency Chorley Council Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside	Yarrow	Chorley	Alongside the Croston Flood Alleviation construction work there is a 10 year programme of enhancement works to the River Yarrow	To improve the habitat, further reduce flood risk, reduce diffuse pollution and provide opportunities for education. This work also has strong connections to the Yarrow Invasive Non-native Species project.	Deliver a diverse programme of improvements including wetland construction, fencing of water courses, river restoration and slow the flow techniques. Engage local people and deliver social and economic benefits like access to blue space, education and community assets.	2015-2025	Environment Agency Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

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Close Brook Improvement Project	Groundwork CLM Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside	Close Brook (Douglas)	Wigan	The project will install a reed bed and improve the banks of Close Brook.	Improve the water quality of Close Brook and protect it from the risk of pollution from a historic landfill site. This work will reduce urban diffuse pollution in Close Brook and accordingly in the River Douglas, reducing the concentration of pollutants such as phosphates which are present in detergents. It will also provide better habitats for aquatic wildlife.	Install a reed bed. Provide erosion protection along the banks of a landfill site. Improve the general amenity of the area through litter picks.	April 2015- April 2016	Catchment Partnership Action Fund
Natural Erosion Prevention	West Lancashire Borough Council Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire and Merseyside Environment Agency	Tawd	West Lancs	Provide natural erosion prevention solutions for the River Tawd	Improve the amenity value of the park (including protecting the footpaths) and improve the habitat within the river. This project links closely to the Love My River Tawd scheme.	Develop a master plan and scope options for natural erosion protection, for example brash. Secure funding and deliver the identified measures whilst also improving the access routes through the park.	January 2016 – June 2017	Whitemoss Landfill Funding

<u>Name</u>	<u>Partners</u>	<u>Sub - Catchment</u>	<u>Local Authority area</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Aims</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Timeframes for Delivery</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
Education Project	Wigan Council Other partners to be developed	Smithy Brook Catchment-wide	Wigan Others to be developed	Develop and deliver a water-based education programme.	Promote understanding of rivers, lakes, groundwater and coastal waters and tap into young people as ambassadors for change.	Increase the percentage of young people engaged with the water environment.	April 2016 – March 2017	Wigan Council Others to be developed.
Haigh Woodland improvements	Wigan Council Environment Agency	Douglas	Wigan	Review the management of the woodland in the Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme inundation area.	Improve the resilience of the woodland area upstream of the Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme to periodic flooding when the scheme operates.	Review the woodland survey of the area and identify more resilient species of trees which are better able to thrive when ground conditions are periodically saturated by operation of the flood scheme. Identify opportunities for wetland creation and investigate funding mechanisms to deliver these.	April 2016 – March 2018	Environment Agency Wigan Council Others to be developed, including Corporate Social Responsibility.
Water Pollution Risk Reviews	Groundwork Cheshire Lancashire Merseyside Environment Agency	Tawd Lostock Douglas	West Lancs South Ribble Wigan	A programme to support small and medium businesses to tackle sources of water pollution	Reduce urban diffuse pollution from businesses	Provide a confidential, free service to help businesses review their practices to identify sources of pollution. Support business to improve their infrastructure and management practices to tackle sources of pollution.	April 2016 – March 2019	Environment Agency

Our Core Catchment Partners

The Douglas Catchment Partnership is hosted by Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside and consists of local authorities including Wigan and Chorley Council, West Lancashire Borough Council together with the Environment Agency, Natural England, Forestry Commission, National Farmers Union, United Utilities PLC, the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside, Canoe England, The Wild Trout Trust, Turning Tides Partnership, Myerscough College, Keep Britain Tidy, The Ramblers Association, Friends of Astley Park and other local community support groups and volunteers.



Share the Story

To hear about news and updates relating to the River Douglas Catchment Partnership please follow us on Twitter @DouglasPilot

Contact the Host

The River Douglas Catchment Partnership is hosted by [Groundwork](#) Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside

Please contact the River Douglas Catchment Host via email in the first instance sara.clowes@groundwork.org.uk