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**Lower Hoopern Valley, University of Exeter
Update**

Friends of Lower Hoopern Valley AGM

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University of Exeter
16/11/2025**

Tonight

- Lower Hoopern Valley
 - What's been going on in the Valley?
 - Enhancements for wildlife and people
 - Community engagement
 - Future Plans
- Campus green space survey
- Plugs for more sustainability initiatives on campus!



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Lower Hoopern Valley - Our aims for the Valley

- Enhancing biodiversity and 'environmental services', such as helping reduce water run-off and improve water quality.
- Improve access, education opportunities and engagement with our local community.
- Provide a place for research.
- Carbon sequestration (planting some habitats which store carbon such as trees and hedges).



What's been going on in the Valley - Biodiversity enhancements

- Two new hedges planted with University colleagues, students and local community
- Trees planted into bramble patches to enhance scrub diversity.
- Trees surviving well despite the dry summer!
 - 85% alive alongside cycle path near Velwell Road
 - ~90% alive alongside Prince of Wales Road



Biodiversity and environmental enhancements – Nature-based flood management in the Taddiforde Brook

What is it?

- Working with nature to reduce the risk of flooding within a water catchment
- ‘Slow the flow’ –
 - reduce how rapidly water runs off land – prevents down stream flash flooding

Why do it?

- Allows time for sediments and any pollutants to be captured up stream rather than going into wider watercourses.
- Increase habitats for wildlife



Challenges with the Taddiforde Brook

- While some shade is good for water courses, it is too shaded – so few plants can grow on the edges and in the brook.
- In many places the brook is much deeper with steeper banks than we would expect from how wide it is – probably from erosion during high rainfall



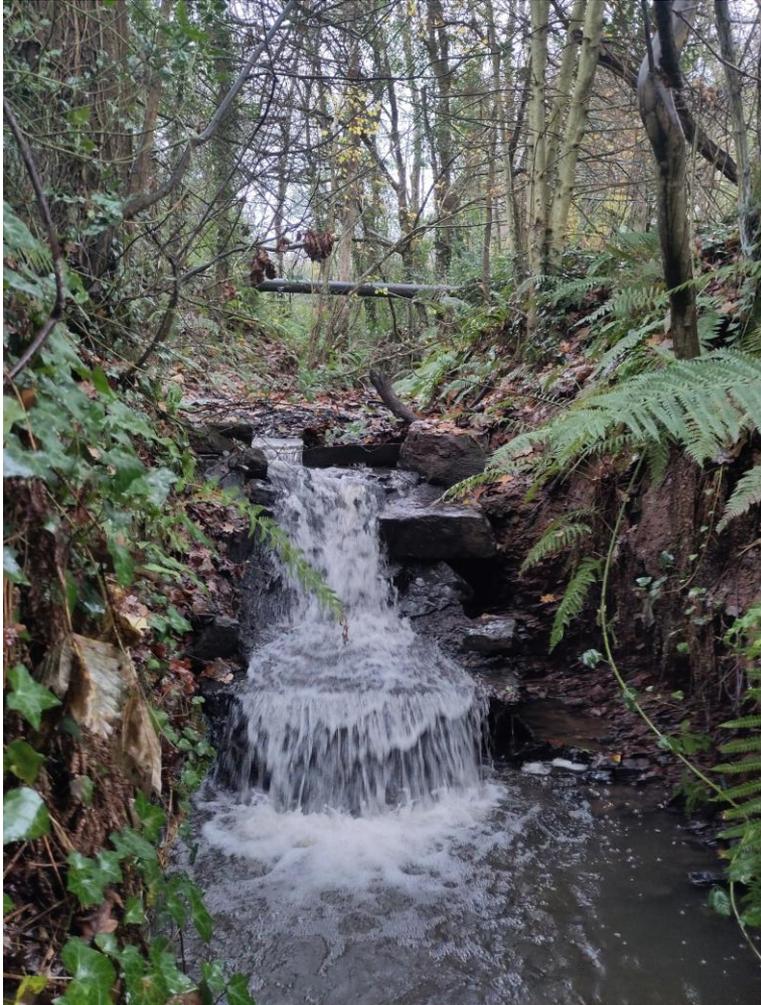
Biodiversity enhancements

- We worked with the Environment Agency, Centre for Resilient Environment, Waste and Water (CREWW), UoE Grounds Team and UoE Estates
- Installed 20 leaky dams and woody flow spreaders, plus woody chevrons, gully stuffing in September 2025
- Wood used was from campus or from taking down low relatively biodiversity value trees next to the brook

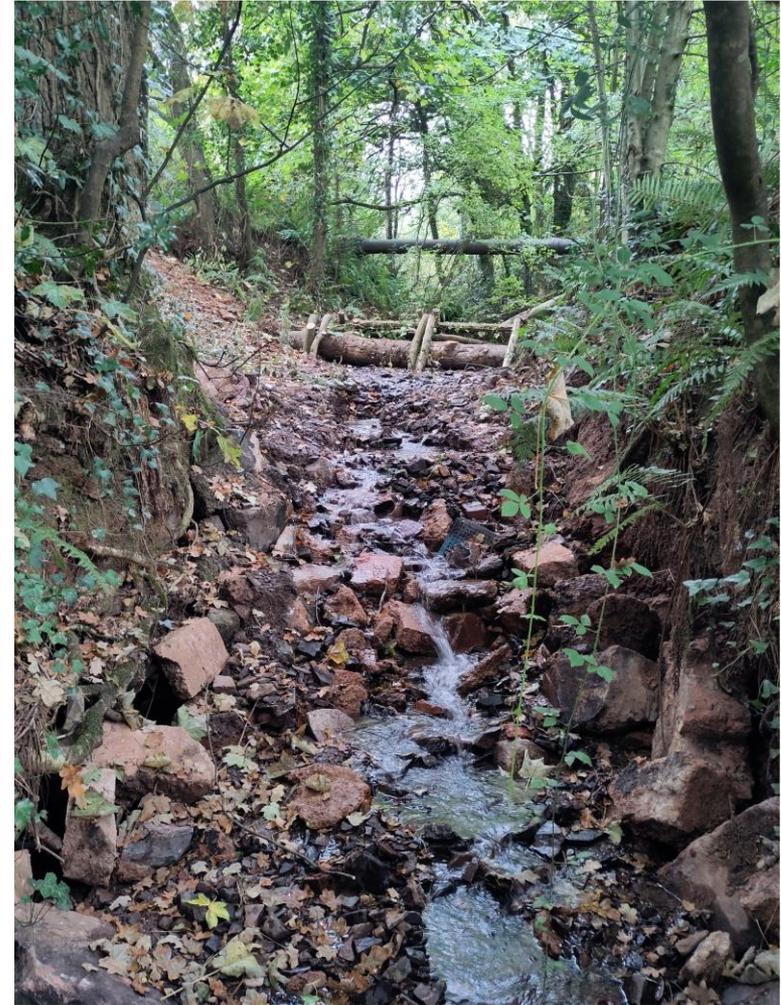


Removed seven artificial weirs

Before – a substantial
barrier

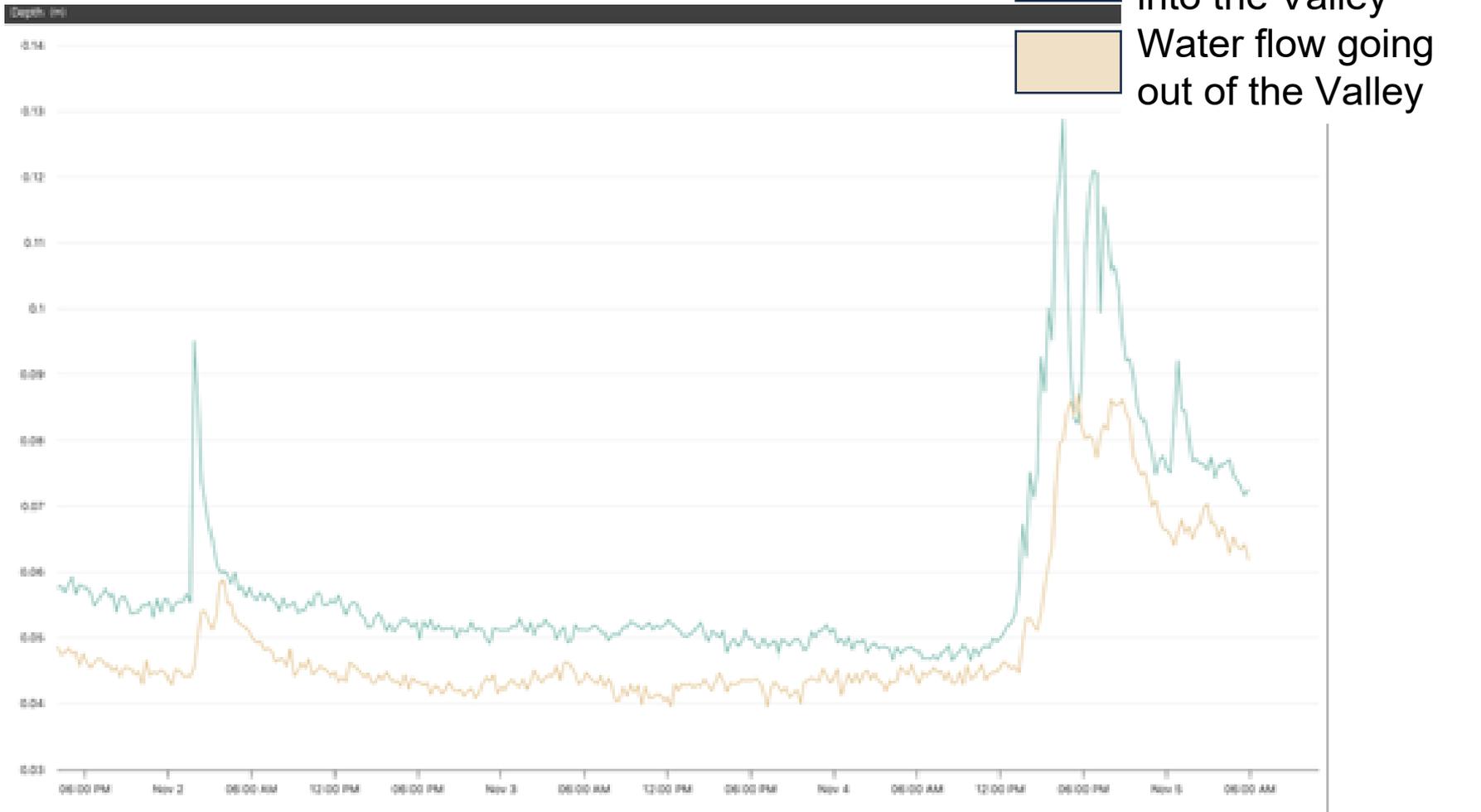


After – more natural habitat
and a leaky dam



Is it working?

It's a bit too early to tell.... But....



Biodiversity monitoring

Citizen science schemes

- RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch – 12 species of bird seen this year
- Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count – 403 butterflies seen this year
- UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme – 420 butterflies from 17 species
- Bumblebee Conservation Trust's BeeWalk – 100 bees from 11 species



Expert led surveys

- Dormouse survey
 - None found in Lower Hoopern, despite suitable habitat



Start using iNaturalist in the Lower Hoopern Valley

- Help the University track its biodiversity and impact
- Identify any wildlife you see on campus or round our sports pitches – or get help with things you don't know
- Download the free app on iOS or Android
- Make observations by taking or adding photos
- Join the campus biodiversity project

Join our project here
Or search on iNaturalist:
**Wild on Campus – Exeter
Campuses Biodiversity**



Community engagement



Self guided tour of the Lower Hoopern
Available on our website -
<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/sustainability/whatwaredoing/biodiversity/lower-hoopernvalley/>





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Sharing the Valley!

- 330 students from Exeter College came to carry out A level practical activities
- Exeter Community Orchestra held their Summer picnic on the accessible path.
- Artist in residence at CREWW Dr. Ellen Wiles has been running creative writing walks. One coming up – 26th Nov
<https://www.agile-rabbit.com/event/walkie-talkie-storying-water/>



Future plans

- Practical plans – we have some more trees to plant – not as many as last year and probably after Christmas
- We are looking to reduce the presence of more dominant species in the grassland.
- Ongoing grassland management
- Invasive species management in the woodland



The Campus Green Space Survey (April-May 2025)

Why?

- We wanted to know what people thought about the campus green spaces, if they gained any benefits from them and to provide a feedback mechanism
- 419 people responded! 66 from the local community
- People used the campuses for travel (62%), to help their well-being (67%), for socialising (60%), for informal exercising (52%)
- What did people want to see more of – opportunities to engage and benches or places to sit

“The uplift to my wellbeing that these spaces afford - the tranquillity, space, connection with nature - I really, really value the green spaces here...”

Future plans - City Nature Challenge 2026

- A global recording event 24th- 27th April
- Exeter being entered for the first time!
- Using iNaturalist, a free recording app
- We are planning on running an on campus event, Friday 24th
- Please share with anyone who might like to run a biodiversity recording event – you can be a formal partner organisation (and an organisation can be an individual)– or just run one!

sustainability@exeter.ac.uk



Come and join the Repair Café!

Tuesday 25th November in
the Digital Maker Space
11am-3pm

(on the first floor of the
Forum)

If you would like more
information or to be
involved – email
repaircafe@exeter.ac.uk



Thank you for listening!

- All updates are available on our website

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/about/sustainability/whatwearedoing/biodiversity/lowerhoopernvalley/>



- Keep an eye on the noticeboards!



- Follow us on Instagram

- Sustainability Team @uoesustainability
- Grounds Team @universityofexetergrounds



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