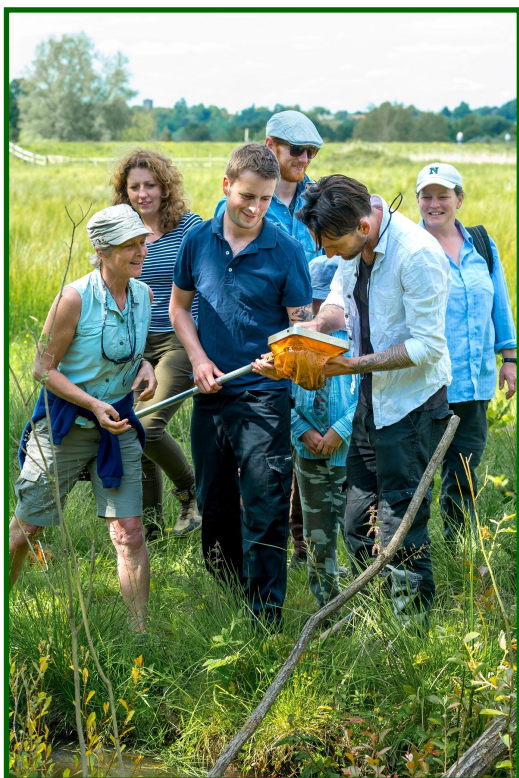


Arun & Rother Connections Evaluation Report



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Resources for Change
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2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arun & Rother Connection (ARC) project is an innovative, Heritage Lottery funded project that covers the catchments of the Rivers Arun and Rother, being delivered by a partnership of both national and local natural heritage bodies.

The ARC project appointed Resources for Change (R4C) to undertake an external evaluation to 'evaluate the nature and level of impact of the project, using the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework as the basis for reporting'.

The evaluation methodology focused on finding out what those involved thought of the project; how it had been run and what it had achieved. This, combined with an analysis of the monitoring data provides a rounded picture of the projects impacts and its strengths and weaknesses.

The evaluation findings show that the output targets, as set out in the M&E Framework were achieved or exceeded and this sense of success was supported by both participants and stakeholders who clearly felt that the ARC's aims had largely been met.

The evaluation has shown that core to this achievement has been the successful development and management of a partnership that could collaborate to deliver a wide range of heritage projects and engage a large number people. It is this partnership working that is perhaps the biggest success of the ARC project.

Understanding the real impact of a project like ARC is always challenging within a project reporting timescale but by using an innovative approach – Most Significant Difference Conversations – the project team and evaluators could get a flavor of what the longer-term impacts might look like:

- A strong local partnership bringing together different aspects of conservation, land management and recreation to all work together, creating a sense of community of all those interested in the local rivers and catchments
- A wider audience, with a stronger voice, engaged in caring for their local heritage and specifically people much more aware of the problem of invasive species and engaged in removing them from the catchment
- An ongoing conversation about the catchment, the importance of rivers and the need to reconnect these heritage assets with their local communities and especially young people.

The report identifies that for many stakeholders the original motivation for their involvement would have been achieving practical improvements to the natural heritage, but what they value most at the end of the project is the people and process outcomes of collaboration, conversation, engagement and capacity building.

The name Arun & Rother Connections seems very suitable as it is these connections that have helped make the delivery of the project possible and are an important potential legacy.

The legacy now needs to be secured. The ARC team have developed a future for many of the project activities but there is a need for the collaborative style of working to continue and to be strengthened and developed.

This collaborative working will continue through the work of the Arun & Western Streams Catchment Partnership, whose purpose is to bring local communities and key stakeholders together, to agree priorities and facilitate delivery of projects on the ground to improve the local water environment in a coordinated way. All seven of the ARC partner organisations participate in this steering group. Strong leadership, momentum and action here will be vital in securing the ARC legacy - www.arunwesternstreams.org.uk/about.

3. INTRODUCTION

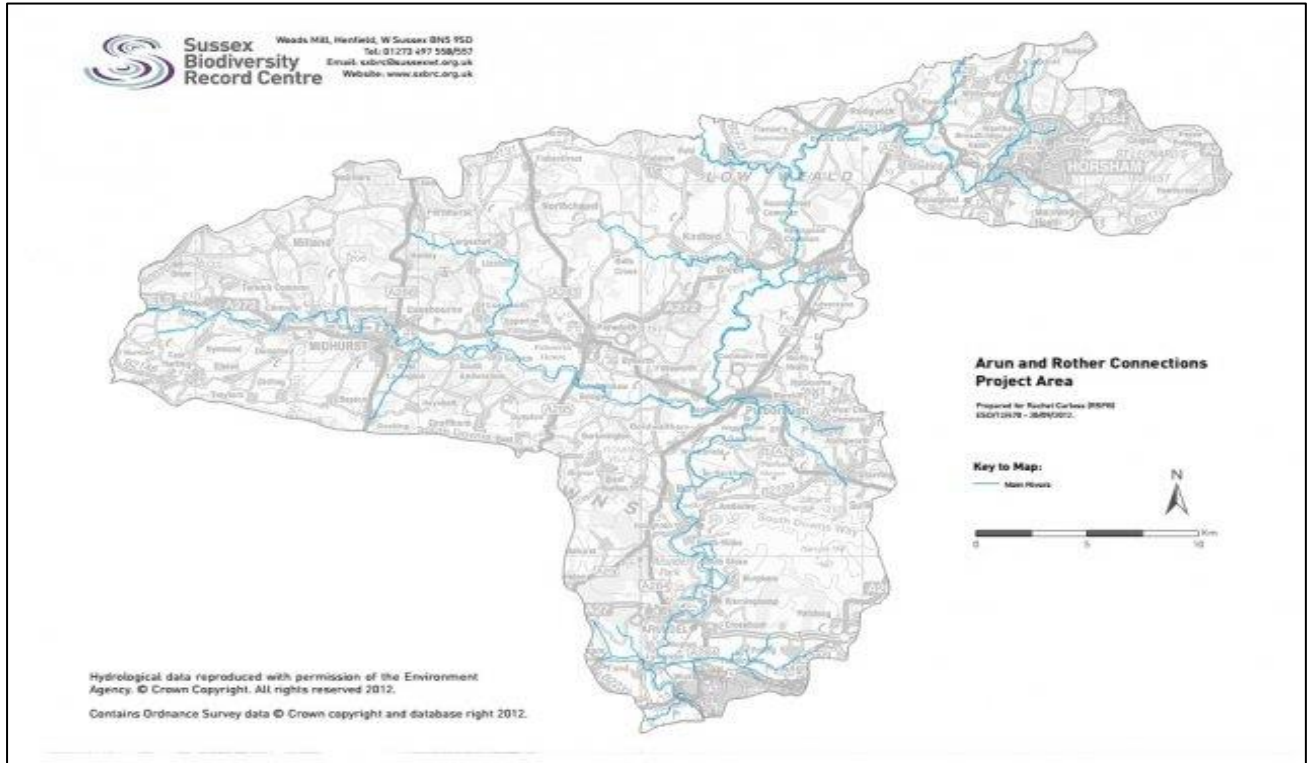
3.1 Arun & Rother Connections

The Arun & Rother Connection project is an innovative, Heritage Lottery funded partnership project that has the following aims:

- Promote a rich and thriving river system where wildlife flourishes and where people value and enjoy the landscape, natural and cultural heritage
- Work with landowners to protect, restore and reconnect wildlife habitats
- Improve water quality and eliminate non-native invasive species
- Better connect the community to the catchment, through access improvements, engagement opportunities and interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the project area.

The project, which covers the catchments of the Rivers Arun and Rother, as set out in the map below, has been delivered by a partnership hosted by the RSPB and including the Sussex Wildlife Trust, South Downs National Park Authority, West Sussex County Council, Environment Agency, the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust and Natural England.

Figure 1: Map of the Project area



It could be described as a project where 'catchment management' meets 'landscape scale conservation' combining as it does focused river restoration projects with wider landscape initiatives and large scale community engagement. This means that it is potentially a project with a lot to say, and evaluation provides away of capturing the impact and the key messages and making them available to a wider audience.

The ARC project appointed Resources for Change (www.r4c.org.uk) to undertake an external evaluation to 'evaluate the nature and level of impact of the project, using the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework as the basis for reporting'. The M&E framework links the projects aims and objectives with those of the funder and provides the structure through which the project's success can be evaluated.

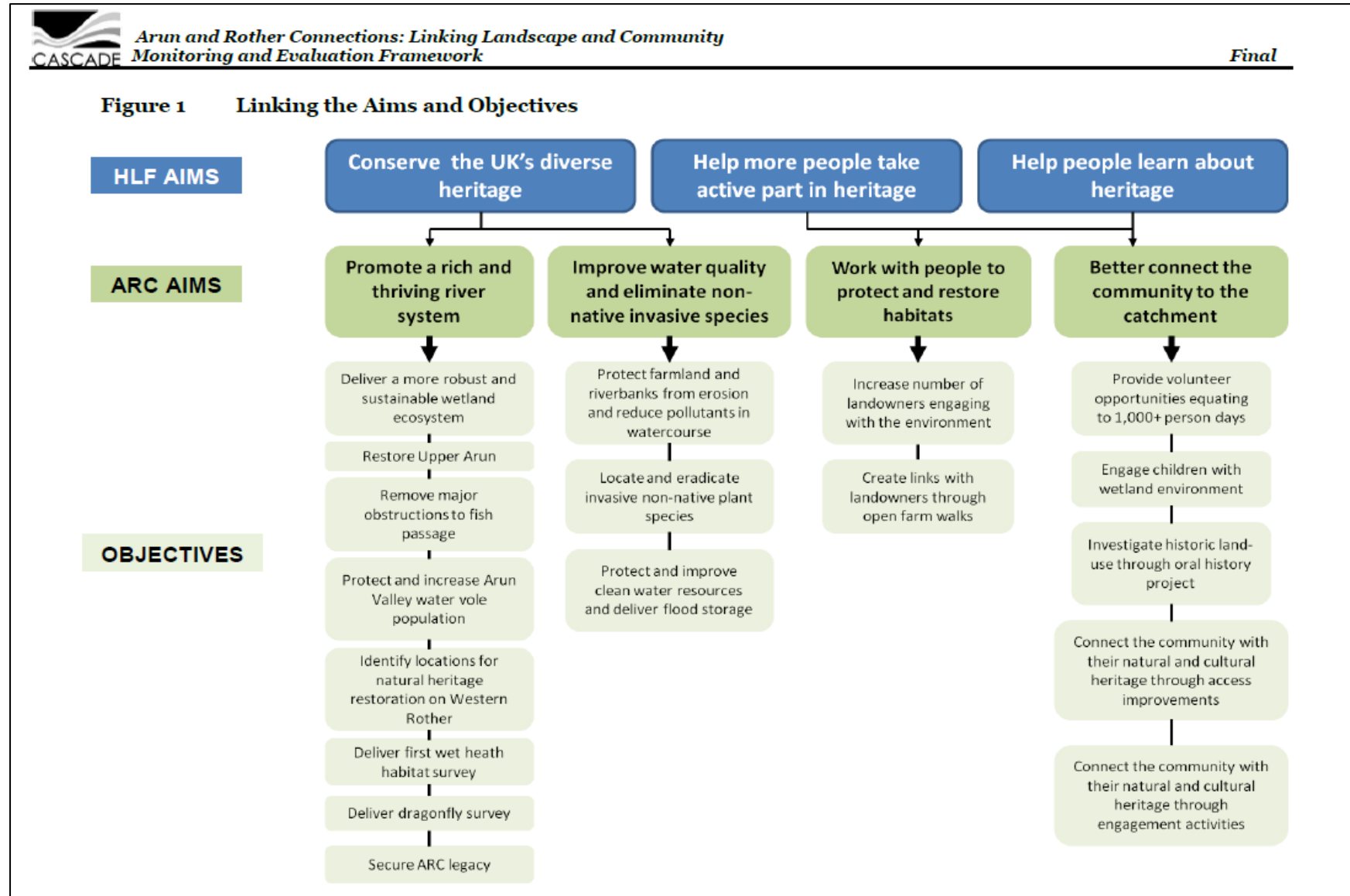
3.2 Evaluation Framework

The monitoring and evaluation framework was developed, by Cascade Consulting¹, as a strategic planning tool that clearly defined the objectives, methods of data collection and the indicators that would be used to measure progress and overall success of the project.

High level aims are identified by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for all the projects it funds, and further specific aims were developed for the ARC project. The framework breaks these down further into individual objectives which will contribute to the aims of the project and a set of targets for each objective has been developed to establish levels of success. The framework also outlined the types of monitoring that should be undertaken for each target, how often the monitoring should be undertaken and by whom this should be completed. Figure 2 shows how the framework linked individual actions to the overall aims of the project.

¹ ARC Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, Cascade Consulting 2013

Figure 2: Structure of the Evaluation Framework



3.3 Evaluation methodology

HLF's guidance is based around the purpose of evaluation being to 'prove and improve', encouraging funded programmes to gather robust evidence, and to use this positively for future work. Fundamentally evaluation is about constructive learning - what went well, what didn't go so well, how things could be improved, understanding better the impact of what has been done, informing future work and demonstrating how other organisations or projects can learn from this experience.

R4C's approach to evaluating landscape scale projects is to primarily find out what those involved think. This, combined with an analysis of the monitoring data provides a rounded picture of the projects impacts and its strengths and weaknesses. In the case of the ARC project the key elements of the evaluation were:

- An output data review, linked to the M&E framework, to assess if the targets had been met
- An online survey of project participants involving 124 individuals
- 20 semi structured stakeholder interviews – including staff, board members and representatives of the different audience groups identified at the outset as important to the project
- 33 'Most Significant Difference Conversations'.

The interview questions for both the online survey and stakeholder interviews are provided in Appendix 1 as is the methodology for running 'Most Significant Difference Conversations'.

The evaluator facilitated a validation workshop with staff and partnership members, with the aim of actively involving key players in drawing out key learning points and discussing appropriate conclusions to be included in the evaluation. Experience shows the value of this in increasing buy-in to the evaluation's outputs with those people who will take responsibility for their implementation, as well as providing the evaluator with valuable practical input and advice.

Many people have been engaged in this evaluation process including project staff, representatives from project delivery partner organisations and range of project participants, (volunteers, trainees, event attendees). R4C is very grateful to everyone who gave their time and input so willingly and constructively. All photo's included in this report have been provided by the ARC Project.

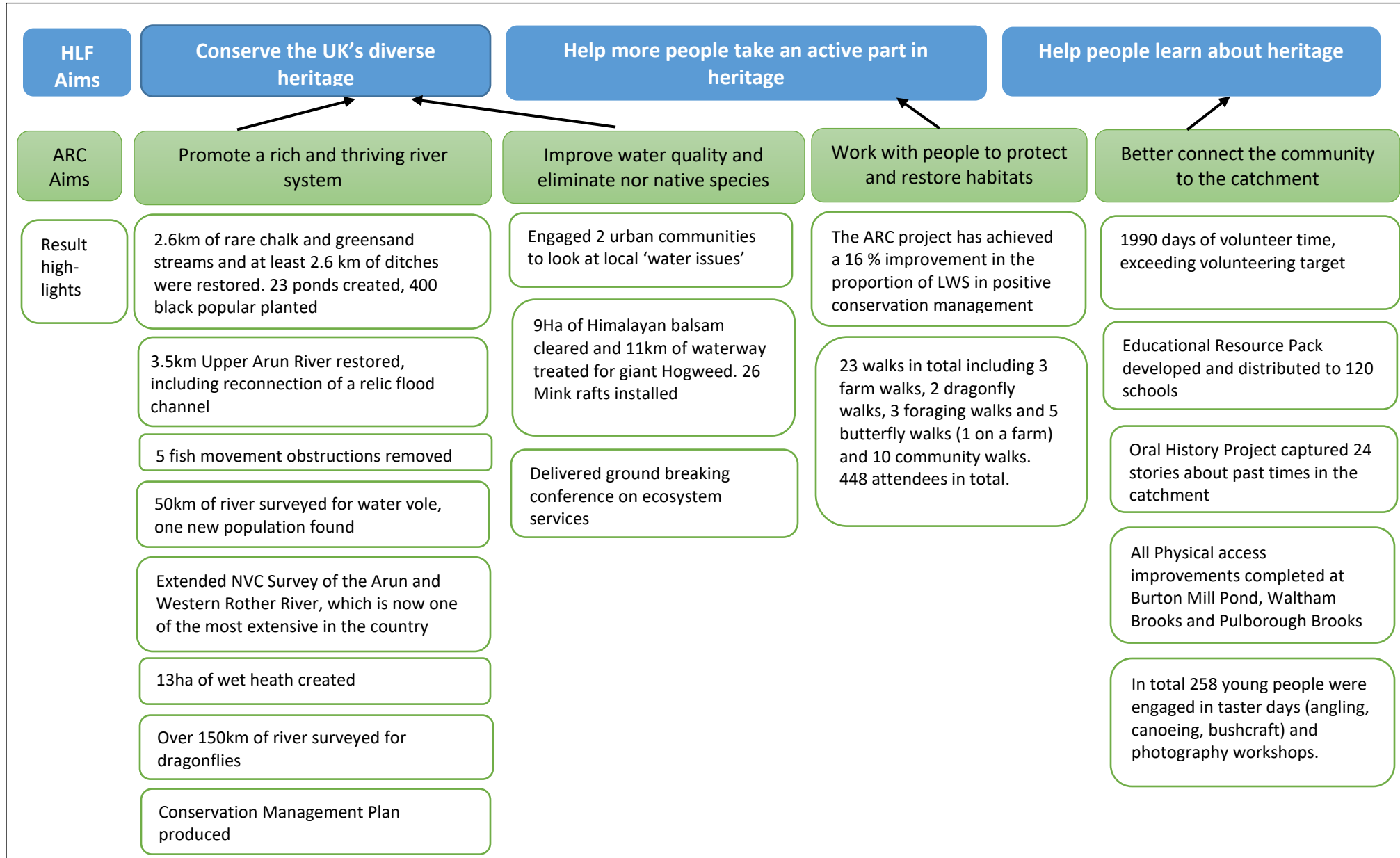
4. MONITORING RESULTS

The M&E Framework set out an extensive monitoring programme to capture the data required to prove that the projects aims & objectives had been met (or not). This monitoring programme has been effectively implemented by the staff and volunteer team and a considerable amount of monitoring data has been collected.

Figure 3 below, uses the same format as the framework to show how a selection of the projects outputs contribute to both the project aims and those of the funder, HLF.

A headline result has been given for each objective but this is by no means the whole story. Much more was achieved in the delivery of each objective and a more comprehensive report on this has been provided in Appendix 2. This shows that in most cases the targets set for each objective have been achieved or exceeded. Where this has not been the case it has been because of external factors such as the weather or funding or knowledge that has come to light during the delivery phase which has resulted in a rethink. In all cases reallocation of resources has been done with agreement of the funder and the partners and revised targets have been delivered.

Figure 3: Headline Monitoring Results



5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

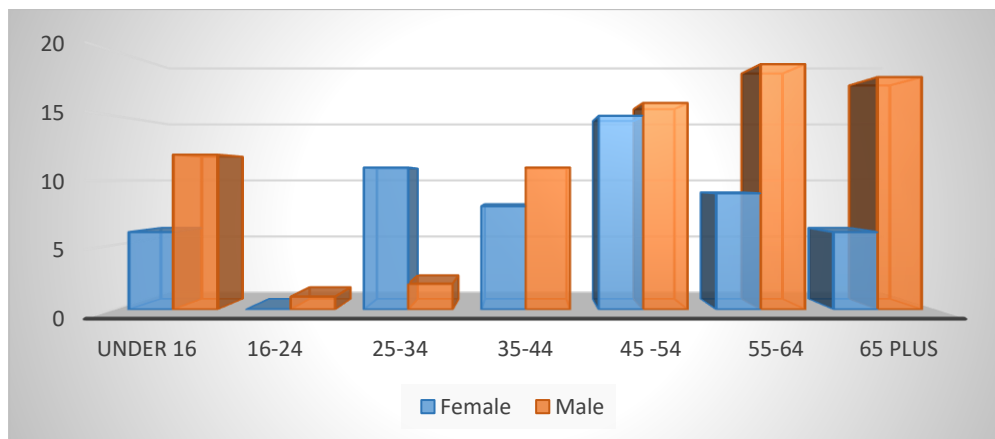
This section summarises the responses gained from the evaluation research; primarily from the participant's online survey, the stakeholder interviews and the 'Most Significant Difference Conversations'.

5.1 Who was involved in the evaluation research

5.1.1 Participants

Through the online survey 124 project participants were engaged. Figure 4 shows that there was a fairly even gender split and although all age groups were represented we heard from more elderly people than younger. Ethnicity was predominantly 'white British' at 91%, with the second biggest group being 'other Europeans'.

Figure 4: Age and gender profile from the online survey



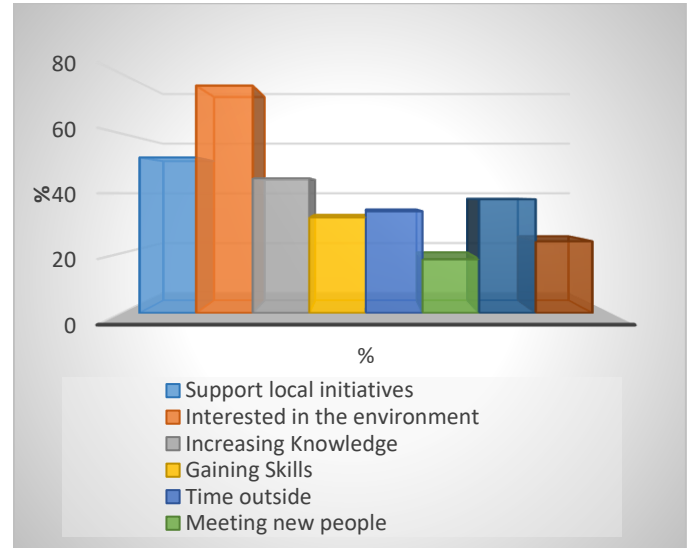
Over 50% of the people who completed the online survey participated in the ARC project as a volunteer or by attending an event run by the project. Figure 5 shows that a smaller proportion attended training events or received advice, and in some instances received financial support by the way of small grants, as the way they had experienced the ARC project.

Participants were asked about their motivations, see figure 6, for getting involved, which were primarily because of an interest in the environment. There was also a significant number of people who were motivated because this was a local activity and one from which they could gain either personal benefit in the form of new skills and knowledge or benefits for their community.

Figure 5: Type of Participation



Figure 6: Motivations



5.1.2 Stakeholders

The 20 stakeholder interviews were undertaken with the following representatives of organisations involved in the Project.

Table 1: Stakeholder Interviews

5	Staff	
6	Partners	RSPB, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Arun & Rother Rivers Trust, Environment Agency, South Downs National Park Authority, Natural England
14	Audiences	landowners, recreational users, community (both formal and informal), schools & young people, black and multi-ethnic groups and digital families.

5.2 How well did they think the project was delivered?

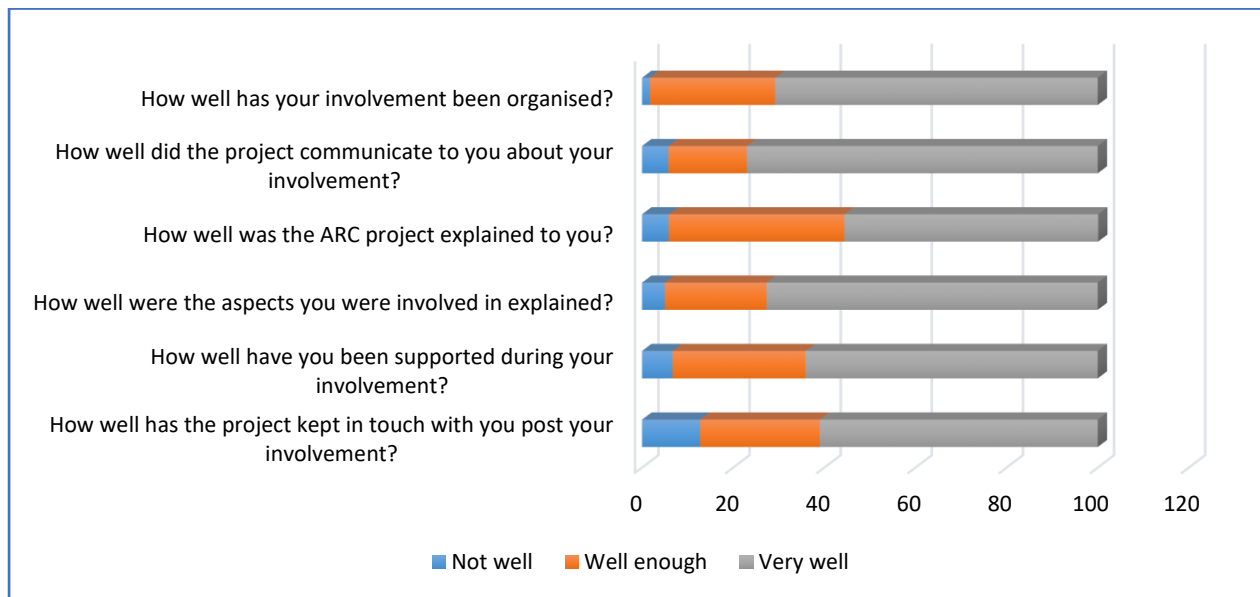
5.2.1 Participants

Participants were asked to rate their experience of the project in terms of how their involvement was managed. The results set out in figure 7 show that for most people their involvement had been very positive and this was largely attributed to the professionalism and positive attitude of the project team.

“the people I have worked with have been extremely enthusiastic, professional and welcoming towards volunteers. An excellent example of how to work with people to improve habitats.”

The only area participants identified where they felt a bit more could have been done was around communicating how they fitted into the wider ARC project and follow up communication once their involvement had finished. These are not major weaknesses, more areas where participants felt a bit more could be done, which would potentially enhance further their involvement.

Figure 7: Participant Experience



5.2.2 Stakeholders

The project partners spoke about their sense of pride about the way the project had been delivered and were pleased to have been involved. Like the participants there was a recognition that the project team had been very professional with a strong project management ethos combined with a personable approach to working with a wide range of people and organisations. In their view the project team’s drive and energy was vital to creating the success. The wider stakeholders echoed this and in all cases felt their involvement had been positive both for them and for the project. A number commented that their engagement was with a specific component of the ARC project and it was not always apparent how this fitted into the bigger picture.

The way the partnership worked was seen in a very positive light, not only by the formal project partners but also from the wide range of other organisations who helped deliver aspects of the project. There was an ethos of collaboration developed that not only helped deliver results but also enabled the project to respond to and resolve several challenges that came about because of external factors:

Funding regimes changed and adverse weather conditions meant that schedules had to be realigned and staff changes created uncertainty. In each case the tenacity of the team and the support of the partners meant that the issues could be resolved and the project moved forward.

“They (the partnership) worked seamlessly. I would see someone with a different badge, but they were all ARC really”.

The administration of a project of this type was seen by some stakeholders as burdensome, perceiving that large amounts of time and money was spent on meeting the requirements of the funder and the partners, money that could have been spent, in their opinion, on delivering improvements in the catchment. However, this was not voiced as a criticism of the team but more a comment about the system in general. In fact, many stakeholders were appreciative of the fact that RSPB took on this load and did, in the stakeholders view, a good job.

5.3 What has it achieved?

At the start of their interview each stakeholder was asked, from their own personal perspective, what they felt that the ARC project had achieved. The common themes that came out were:

- Improved awareness of what's in the local area in respect to the river and its heritage
- Delivered a comprehensive programme of habitat enhancement work
- Engaged with the public as well as those involved in conservation work
- Given the community a voice especially in respect to flooding and invasive species and found different ways to engage and upskill people to carry things on themselves
- Brought lots of different people together and demonstrated that they could work together in a cross organisational partnership.

There was no one thing that stood out for most people. However, in general terms stakeholders identified the process achievements, such as effective partnership working and raising awareness as particularly important, as one person said....

“It has proved that catchment scale works and that we can succeed at ambitious stuff. ARC provides a template for other projects”.

5.4 Delivering the projects aims

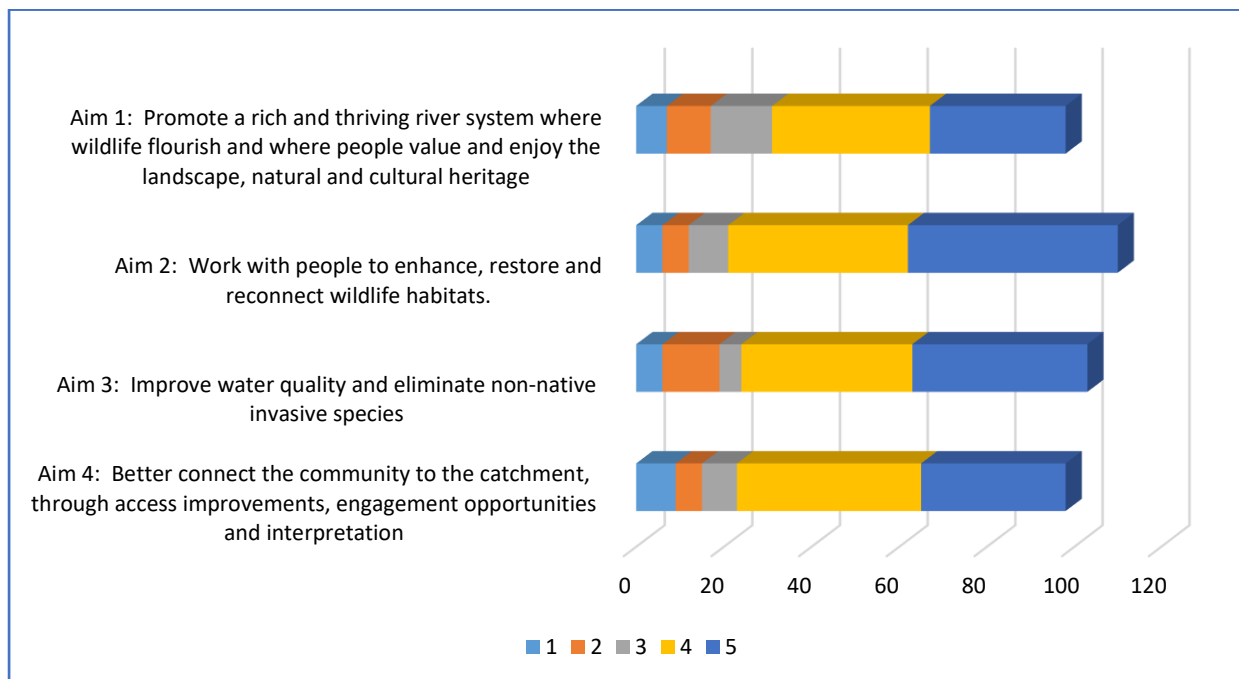
The M&E framework shows how the ARC project aims delivered the outcomes required by the funder HLF. The evaluation set out to explore how those involved in the project felt how well those aims had been achieved.

5.4.1 Participants perspective

The project participants undertaking the online survey were asked to rank the achievement of each project aim, with a score of 5 indicating that in their opinion the aim had been largely achieved whilst a score of 1 indicated that nothing had been achieved. Figure 8 shows that each aim scored highly (yellow and dark blue segments), suggesting that most participants felt that the project aims had largely been achieved. Where there were lower scores, this related to people's views that the project time was too short to achieve lasting change and therefore it was too early to be making such an assessment. Other reasons why some participants provided a low score was because their special interested or issue had not been addressed.

“Three years is a relatively short length of time to achieve what is listed. Although there is still much work to do and I believe the project can only fully reach its potential through continuity, it has been very well managed and engaged many people.”

Figure 8: Participant perspective on the achievement of Project Aims



5.4.2 Stakeholders

Stakeholders were similarly asked their views on how well the aims of the ARC project had been delivered. Like participants this was largely positive and a synopsis of their views is given below:

Aim 1: Promote a rich and thriving river system where wildlife flourishes and where people value and enjoy the landscape, natural and cultural heritage



This was a massive aim; a lot had been achieved, the project had performed well, and many successful examples of good practice had been developed such as the Riverfly project.

Aim 2: Work with people to protect, restore and reconnect wildlife habitats



Engagement of local community, particularly landowners, was a real strength of this project which led to some exciting habitat enhancement projects. It was felt that the project worked well with the landowning community who have a growing concern about how rivers are being managed.

Aim 3: Improve water quality and eliminate non-native invasive species



The work with invasive species was a big success both in terms of raising awareness and actual removal although the aim to eliminate was seen as over ambitious in the time frame. Similarly, the improving of water quality was a very large ambition and one that was difficult to measure. For this reason, those interviewed were not clear as to progress made and felt that it was probably not an appropriate target for a project of this type.

Aim 4: Better connect the community to the catchment, through access improvements, engagement opportunities and interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the project area.



The project made lots of connections across the catchments, linking to people who had not been involved before and introducing those who had to different places and activities. Getting people to work together, particularly those who had not done so before such as anglers and conservationists was an important success.

5.5 Impact

5.5.1 What was the most significant difference the ARC project made?

Thirty-Three 'Most Significant Difference Conversations' were undertaken with people involved in the project where they were asked to articulate what they thought was the most significant difference the ARC project had made. The themes that emerged were as follows:

- Brought together different aspects of conservation, land management and recreation to all work together. Created a sense of community of all those interested in the local rivers and catchments
- Made people much more aware of the problem of invasive species and engaged them in practical tasks to address the issue
- Opened out issues of catchment, its rivers and their conservation to a wider audience, especially helping local communities engage with the local environment
- Created an effective partnership that helped put the concepts of catchment management and river restoration on the map
- Helped existing wildlife groups through grants, advice and practical support
- Engaged with school children outside of the classroom, giving them a different experience of the river. Learnt a lot and enjoyed the experience
- Made connections that enabled more people to experience and enjoy their local heritage.

To explore project impact in a bit more depth participants were asked to identify what the most valuable thing that the ARC project has done for the environment (fig 9) and for local people, (fig 10).

Figure 9: What is the most valuable thing the ARC project has done for the environment?

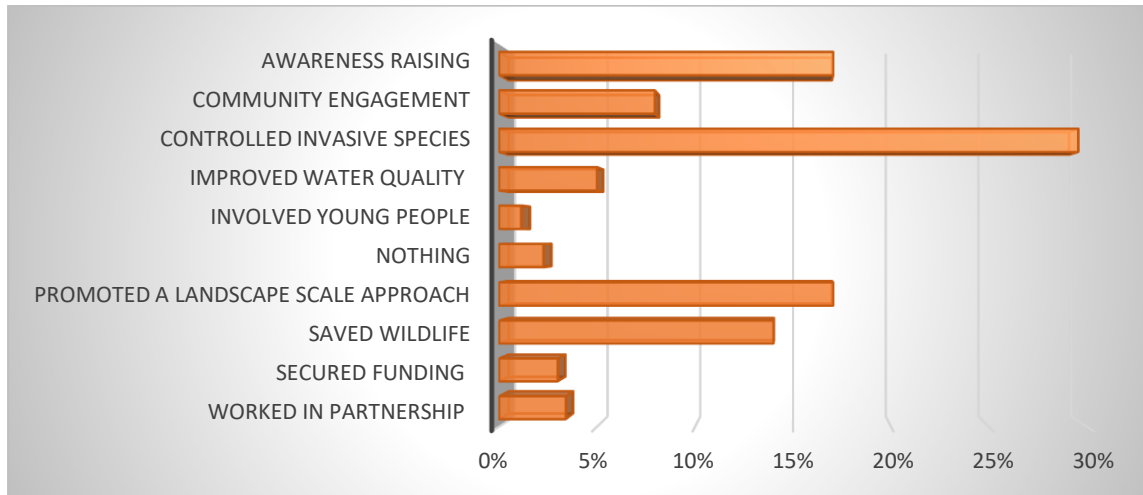
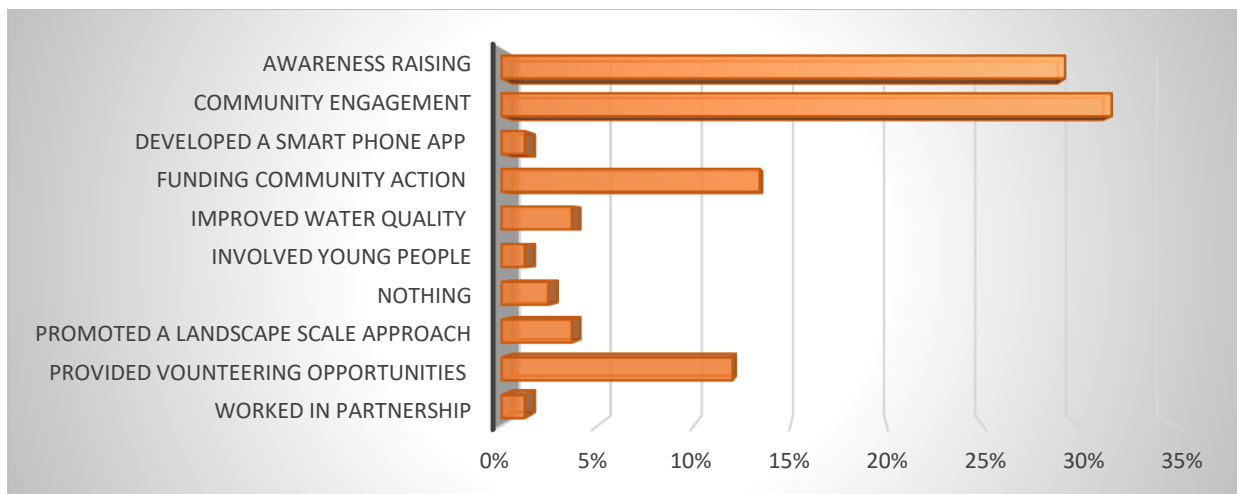


Figure 10: What is the most valuable thing the ARC project has done for local people?



From an environmental perspective, the control of invasive species was the most valuable aspect of the project.

The second most valuable aspect in both the environment and local people category is ‘raising awareness’. Clearly people feel that is a very valuable component of the project of this type – raising the issues and demonstrating what needs to be done. The opportunities for engagement and volunteering are also valued highly and are seen as important in bringing benefits to for local people.

These results chime well with feedback from the stakeholders who felt that awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Arun & Rother catchment has increased during the life of the project. There had been a lot of effort put into communication and publicity and the use of social media was particularly noted as an important mechanism for raising awareness about the project and the issues it was addressing. Linked to this was the development of a smart phone App which had been downloaded over 1000 times. This provided people with information about the project, walking routes to explore the area and away of capturing sightings of wildlife and other interesting features.

The ARC project was shortlisted for three prestigious awards; the CIRIA ‘Big biodiversity challenge’ awards, The Charity Awards and the Campaign for National Parks ‘Park Protector Awards’, winning the latter, which helped to develop its profile and bring it to the attention of a wider audience.

The participant’s survey and interviews also explored the benefits people derived from being involved. Participants found the experience to be an enjoyable one which is perhaps why the category ‘Motivated to do more to protect the environment’ also came out as an important benefit. If people enjoy themselves, they are more likely to come back. In section 2.1.1 ‘interest in the environment’ came out as the primary motivation for people getting involved in the ARC project so it is reassuring the same people reported that they benefitted from being better informed about the local environment because of their involvement. Figure 11 shows how people felt they had personally benefitted from being involved.

Figure 11: Personal benefits



Stakeholders were asked what they had personally gained from their involvement and a selection of responses shows that the project has challenged people to do new and different things and this has had a positive impact upon them.

- *“Increasing knowledge, ecological and geographical and commercially”*
- *“Found a way that I can volunteer almost tailored to me. It’s been a great team and my life has been enriched by the experience”*
- *“Some of the things I’ve learnt here I will be able to use in Africa”*
- *“Learnt a lot about the practical delivery of ambitious projects”*
- *“Professional development including spraying license and wildflower Identification”*
- *“Learnt so much about the catchment and contract management. Team working, managing consultants, complex budget management, prioritizing”*
- *“App - learnt that this is not the best approach. It has raised profile but has not really delivered on data or learning”*
- *“Highlight of working life - new ways of working and thinking”.*

5.5.2 What will the long-term benefits of the project will be?

This was a question asked to stakeholders only. Their response can be summarized as follows:

The ARC project is an innovative project that has been a catalyst for action. It has *‘kick started the thinking about the health of the whole river’* and developed more local interest in a catchment based landscape scale approach.

It has demonstrated the power of effective partnership working and it is this experience that is the key long-term benefit. If this collaborative way of working can be maintained, then much of the work started by the ARC project will continue. This means that in the long-term there will continue to be a partnership delivering meaningful projects some of which will be continuations of ARC work, others of which will be completely new, responding to changing circumstances.

5.6 Legacy

Stakeholders were asked what they thought should happen next in relation to carrying on the work started by the ARC project.

Stakeholders talked about legacy in three different but related ways.

Firstly, many felt that the type of work the ARC project was doing had to continue in one form or another, particularly that related to environmental education and community engagement. This was not necessarily catchment related but a general recognition these were very important things to continue doing.

“Young people should be taught about the landscape, what it does and why we need it. In British education, they need to take the natural environment (nature) seriously”

Secondly many stakeholders wanted to see specific ARC activities continue and there was a recognition that the project team had worked hard to find a future for many aspects of their work. The South Downs National Park Invasive Species Strategy which had come out of the ARC’s work and the Riverfly Project run by the Rivers Trust were mentioned as examples of this, where an organisation had been found to continue the work.

“Certainly the Rivers Trust (ARRT) now have whole raft of river fly monitors because of ART, which is the key resource need to keep the project going”

The third component of legacy of concern to the stakeholders was the continuation of the partnership once the project was completed. Here there were more questions than answers. It was recognised that the RSPB had provided leadership during the project and the teams project management abilities were critical to successful delivery. Without these would the partnership continue? Who was going to fill the gap? Two possible options put forward being the Arun and Western Streams Catchment Partnership and the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust. Both had been involved in the ARC project and both appeared, in people’s minds, to be well placed to lead the partnership in the future.

“ARC has created momentum - where does the leadership and future momentum come from?”

6. ANALYSIS

This section presents the evaluators analysis of the responses, together with some reflections on learning that came out of the Validation workshop.

6.1 Achieving Results

The monitoring results show that in many cases targets have been not only been met but exceeded. The structured M&E framework allows the project to demonstrate how these results have delivered the aims of the project and consequently the aims of the funder. The comprehensive nature of the monitoring data should also be noted as it is not always the easiest element of project management to motivate people to contribute monitoring data. The fact that the ARC has this data not only supports an effective evaluation but creates a strong baseline upon which to evaluate future heritage conservation work in the catchments.

This positive delivery performance is supported by both the projects participants and stakeholders who feel, in more qualitative terms, that the project has achieved a lot and largely delivered on its aims & objectives. This is important, as being part of something successful is inspiring and motivating and is an important project legacy. When it was felt that the project had not achieved this was largely attributed to ‘aspirational and ambitious’ target setting at the outset. This highlights an important tension in a project of this type where there is a perceived need to be ‘aspirational and ambitious’ to win support at the outset but also a need to be realistic when it comes to what can be achieved on the ground. So, the aim ‘to improve water quality’ is one that one that would be supported by most people but it has been very difficult for the ARC project to deliver activities in this complex area in a way that is attributable to the project.

Participants were asked what they valued most about the ARC’s achievements for both the environment and local people. It is interesting to note that in terms of environmental action, out of all the things the project did, it was the invasive species work that people felt was most valuable. This suggests that future work in this area would engender public support and involvement.

In both categories ‘raising awareness’ was considered as a very valuable activity, perhaps in part because those undertaking the questionnaire had their ‘awareness raised’ and were appreciative of it, but also because they feel that other people should know more about their locality, the problems it faces and the ways they can get involved.

Often funders and project delivers are looking for tangible and practical improvement on the ground but it is worth reflecting that the public, in the case of these participants, value knowing more and others having the chance to know more as well.

6.2 Project Delivery

6.2.1 Partnership

Partnership was chosen as the 'operating model' through which to deliver the ARC project because of the wide range of interests that had to be involved when considering a catchment scale approach.

For several the organisations involved this represented a fairly new way of working and they identified a steep learning curve and considerable personal and organisational benefits from being involved. An interesting observation here is that many of these organisations will have been involved in partnerships but perhaps not one that was so action orientated. Many partnerships exist, (including ones focussed on catchments) to share information and carry out collaborative planning while the ARC partnership was focussed on delivering collaborative action on the ground. This required strong leadership from the RSPB and competent project management from the ARC team.

The feedback suggests that although the partnership working was largely successful there were tensions and difficult moments. The partnership was made up of a range of very different organisations from government agencies to recently formed voluntary sector bodies. These all had different expectations about what a project of this type could deliver for them, different ways of working and effects of different external influences during the life of the project. This at times created a considerable challenge for the ARC team who had to navigate through this complexity to keep the project moving forward. So, what made this partnership successful?

The HLF funding clearly provided a focus, as organisations in the partnership were benefitting financially and therefore it was in their best interests to collaborate. Beyond this clarity of objectives, tenacious project management and the personable approach adopted by the team have come out as the key attributes that have made this partnership a success. When those involved talk about 'enjoying being involved' then you have probably got the glue that makes the partnership really work.

Clearly partnership working of this type involves a lot project management effort and it was noted by several stakeholders that a lot of time, effort and money was deployed to manage 'process' and they questioned if more of this could have been directed at tangible environmental improvement in the catchment.

Drawing on experience from other locations, where partnership working has not been so successful, it is worth noting that this has then affected the quality and sustainability of the conservation work delivered. Added to this is that most of the stakeholders interviewed felt that the sense of ‘shared endeavour’ that came out of the partnership working was a very important legacy for the ARC project.

6.2.2 Social media and Smart Phone Apps

The specific activities that were mentioned most frequently in respect to project delivery were the use of new technology and communication media. It was felt that the project had made good use of social media to reach a wider audience and to raise the project profile to decision makers and people of influence – communication was seen as a real strength. This was not the case with the Smart Phone App, the success of which was questioned by many of the stakeholders spoken to. In board terms, it was felt that for the money spent it had little impact and had in some respect been overtaken by developments in the field such as the launch of the irecord App.

The ARC project was instigated at a time when Smart Phone Apps were seen as having significant potential in recording and interpreting heritage. HLF were keen to fund developments in this area, so it is understandable that the project wanted to make use of the technology. The App had an impressive launch event with TV celebrity Chris Packham and has been downloaded over 1000 times however, it does not seem to be stimulating wide spread or long-term use among more than a minority of users. Although the team’s view is that ‘in hindsight they would probably not do a Smart Phone App again’ the learning that has come out of its development has influenced at least one other of the partners who is rethinking its approach to Smart Phone Apps in light of the ARC experience. It is important that this learning is shared to a wide audience and contributes to the ongoing debate about the use of such technology in heritage conservation.

6.3 Impact

The primary purpose of this evaluation was to help the project better understand its impact. This is always a challenge as real impact often only becomes apparent in the longer term. This is particularly the case with ecological projects where species, for example, can take many years to recolonise restored areas and when a project is trying to influence the attitudes and behaviors of people. However, through the evaluation process it is possible to identify emerging impacts, things, that if they continue, will bring about lasting and positive change in the catchments. These are as follows:

People

ARC developed new and strengthened existing relationships with people who live in or around the Arun & Rother catchments, particularly landowners and the local communities and brought people together who wouldn't normally be together such as conservationists and anglers.

This means that more people have been brought into the conversation about rivers, their catchment and a landscape scale approach, and through this awareness is being raised and understanding increased about local local catchment issues.

Also, creating increased capacity and capability in organisations, community and individuals to help address these issues creates the potential to achieve more in the future.

Figure 12: Conversations with the community



Figure 13: Bringing new people into the conversation



Partnership

ARC built a strong partnership which has not only achieved results but has demonstrated that this way of working is an effective way of delivering catchment and landscape scale activities. This has influenced those directly involved to consider this model for future projects and has the potential to be used as a 'best practice' example to influence others.

Figure 14: Partnership in action



Heritage

ARC achieved improvements on the ground. A considerable amount of habitat has been restored through a variety of mechanisms and this, supported by the project Conservation Management Plan should be of long lasting benefit to the catchments environment.

Of particular note are the river restoration projects which are highlighting new ways of working and the invasive species work which has not only reduced or removed problem species from the catchment but has also proved very popular with volunteers.

Figure 15: River restoration



Figure 16: Himalayan Balsam removal



6.4 Legacy

HLF funded projects are encouraged to consider how the activities they have initiated will continue after the project is finished. The ARC project has done a lot of work in this respect. They hosted a workshop for project partners and other stakeholders at about the half-way stage and have worked with partners since then to find ways of taking aspects of the project forward. In some areas, they have been successful – the South Downs National Park is now going to pick up the leadership role for the invasive species work and the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust will take forward the Riverfly project.

This means that aspects of the project will be taken forward, but it is not clear how the overall partnership approach that has proved so successful will continue. The ARC project has shown that an overview is required to be able to connect the right people, to deploy the right resources, to address the most pressing issues and stimulate the thinking about the whole catchment – in essence ‘to make the whole bigger than the sum of its parts’. The ARC project has done that for the period it has been in existence, however, there is a concern coming out of this evaluation that the future work in the catchment will become a series of valuable, but separate activities. If this is the case, then the impact of the ‘catchment connections and conversations’ that has been a key element of the project's success will dissipate and it will become harder to deliver a landscape scale approach.

What would overcome this concern?

If we go back to the attributes that were identified that made this project a success, then perhaps the one that will be particularly important going forward is ‘leadership’. Who is going to step up and lead this approach in the future, who is going to convene the conversations and keep the momentum going? There seems to be three existing partnerships or organisations who have a role in taking this forward:

- Collaborative working will continue through the work of the Arun & Western Streams Catchment Partnership, whose purpose is to bring local communities and key stakeholders together, to agree priorities and facilitate delivery of projects on the ground to improve the local water environment in a coordinated way. All seven of the ARC partner organisations participate in this steering group - www.arunwesternstreams.org.uk/about.
- It is also significant that some of the environmental NGOs with a stake in ARC, namely the RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts, the National Trust and the Woodland Trust, continue to

meet regularly as the “South Downs Lawton Group” and this cooperation will help ensure that aspects of the legacy of ARC continue to be supported and developed.

- the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust, a fairly new organisation but one whose remit is very much aligned to that of the ARC project.

It is not for the Evaluator to say how this should be progressed, but just to flag up that the ARC project has taken this as far as they can – they have found a legacy for a lot of the individual elements of the project, it now needs project partners to build upon these firm foundations.

Figure 17: Legacy in Action



7. CONCLUSIONS

The ARC project was an ambitious attempt to deliver a landscape scale approach across a large river catchment. It has largely succeeded and has shown what can be achieved when often diverse organisations collaborate to deliver results on a scale that none of them would be able to do separately.

It is interesting that for many stakeholders the original motivation for their involvement would have been achieving practical improvements to the natural heritage, but what they value most at the end of the project is the people and process outcomes of collaboration, conversation, engagement and capacity building.

The evaluation has shown that core to this has been the successful development and management of a partnership that could collaborate to deliver a wide range of heritage projects and engage a large number people. It is this partnership working that is perhaps the biggest success of the ARC project.

The partnership has been successful because of strong leadership and effective project management but also because of the time spent developing personal relationships that connected people across the catchment. This helped to make the partnership resilient, enabling it to overcome the challenges that it inevitably faced during its 4-year existence.



The name Arun & Rother Connections seems very suitable as it is these connections that have helped make the delivery of the project possible and are an important potential legacy.

The legacy now needs to be secured. The ARC team have developed a future for many of the projects activities but there is a need for the collaborative style of working to continue so the connections that the project has learnt make a catchment based approach work, are further strengthened and developed.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Evaluation tools

a. Participant interview questions



Arun & Rother Connections Evaluation Survey

Welcome to our survey

Arun and Rother Connections (ARC) is a Heritage Lottery funded £2.2 million landscape-scale project being delivered by a partnership of seven organisations. They aim, working alongside local communities, to promote a thriving river system where wildlife flourishes and where people value the unique natural and cultural heritage. It was born out of the desire to help local people to engage with big landscape issues such as pollution, flooding, invasive species, declining wildlife and the increasing detachment of people from nature.

As the project is nearing completion we would like to hear from those very people we have been engaging with to better understand what impact the ARC project has had from your perspectives. This information will contribute to an end of project evaluation which is being undertaken to help all those involved better understand what worked well and why, as well as capturing the important lessons for the future.

This is a short and anonymous survey. Thank you very much for taking part, your feedback is very important to the project.

1. How have you been involved with the ARC project? (you can tick more than one box)

- As a volunteer
- Attending events
- Attending training courses
- Receiving advice from the project
- As a contractor
- As a partner
- In receipt of a grant
- As a user of the ARC Explorer App
- Other (please specify)

1

2. How well has the ARC project been run? Thinking about your involvement with the ARC project.....

	Not well	Well enough	Very well
How well has your involvement been organised?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well did the project communicate with you about your involvement?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well was the ARC project, its aims, objectives and activities explained to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well was the particular aspects of the project that you were involved in explained to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well have you been supported, during your involvement, by the ARC Project?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well has the project kept in touch with you after your involvement?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Why did you decide to get involved with the ARC project (you can tick more than one box)

- Like to support local initiatives
- Interested in the environment
- An opportunity to learn
- An opportunity to gain skills
- Like being outside
- Chance to meet new people
- To obtain benefits for my community
- Other (please specify)

4. What have you gained from being involved in the ARC project (you can tick more than one box)

- Better understanding of the local environment
- New skills
- Better informed about catchment management
- An enjoyable experience
- Met new people
- Motivated to do more to protect the environment
- Benefits for my community
- Other (please specify)

3

5. What has the ARC project achieved? The ARC project has 4 aims. We are interested to know how much you think has been achieved by the project in each of these 4 areas. Please score each aim on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'achieved' nothing and 5 is 'achieved a lot'.

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't Know
Promote a rich and thriving river system where wildlife flourish and where people value and enjoy the landscape, natural and cultural heritage.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work with people to enhance, restore and reconnect wildlife habitats.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Better connect the community to the catchment, through access improvements, engagement opportunities and interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the project area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help engage people in tackling large and landscape scale catchment issues such as water resources, improving water quality and eliminating non-native invasive species.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you have scored an aim particularly high or low we would be interested to know why

6. In your view what is the most valuable thing the ARC project has done?

For the local environment

For local people

7. Now a little about yourself: Firstly your age and gender

	Female	Male
Under 16	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16-24	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25-34	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35-44	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45-54	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55-64	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
65 and over	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Please describe your ethnicity

- White British
- Other European
- Afro-caribbean
- Asian
- Mixed
- Other

9. Finally please complete the following sentence: The best thing about being involved with the ARC project has been....

10. We would be pleased to hear any other comments you might have about the ARC project and your experience of being involved with it.

b. Stakeholder interview questions

Introduction

In July 2013 the RSPB, in partnership with 6 organisations, received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a 3-year project. Arun and Rother Connections (ARC) is a £2.2 million landscape-scale project being delivered by a partnership of seven organisations working alongside local communities to promote a thriving river system where wildlife flourishes and where people value the unique natural and cultural heritage.

The ARC project has commissioned Resources for Change (www.r4c.org.uk) to carry out a final evaluation, for several reasons: to find out what impact the project has had; to capture the lessons learnt; and, to inform planning for after the end of the HLF funding. It is also an important part of meeting HLF's requirements as the funder.

Using the questions below, we hope to find out about your experiences and views of the project. If you're not sure that you know enough about a question to answer it or don't have an opinion, that's fine, we can just move on to the next one. All contributions to the evaluation will be anonymised, although we will be including a list of contributors within the report.

Thank you very much indeed for agreeing to help; we look forward to speaking to you soon.

Background

1. Please tell us a bit about your involvement with the ARC project

Impact

2. What do you think the ARC project has achieved?
3. The project has 4 specific aims, shown overleaf. How well do you think it performed against each and why? (*We realise that you may not have experience or knowledge of all of these, just focus on those you are familiar with*).

A1: Promote a rich and thriving river system where wildlife flourishes and where people value and enjoy the landscape, natural and cultural heritage

1	2	3	4
Not performed well	Achieved some results but could have done better	Performed well	Don't know.

A2: Work with landowners to protect, restore and reconnect wildlife habitats

1	2	3	4
Not performed well	Achieved some results but could have done better	Performed well	Don't know.

A3: Improve water quality and eliminate non-native invasive species

1	2	3	4
Not performed well	Achieved some results but could have done better	Performed well	Don't know.

A4: Better connect the community to the catchment, through access improvements, engagement opportunities and interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the project area.

1	2	3	4
Not performed well	Achieved some results but could have done better	Performed well	Don't know.

4. Do you think the project has been successful in reaching out to people or organisations who do not normally participate or take an interest in their local environment? If so, in what way?
5. Do you think that awareness, understanding and appreciation of the Arun & Rother catchment has increased during the life of the project? What has the Project done towards this?

6. How have you benefited from being involved in the project? (*things that you have learnt, new contacts made, opportunities for personal/ professional development etc*)

Delivery process

7. In your view, how well do you think the project as a whole has been delivered?
8. Are there any particular things that have either helped or hindered the projects work?
9. How well do you think the partner organisations have worked together?

Legacy

10. What do you think the long-term benefits of the project will be?
11. Will there be any legacy for the organisations involved? If so, what?
12. What would you like to see happen next in relation to the management and conservation of the Arun & Rother Catchment
13. Please complete the following sentence. "In my view, the most significant difference that has been brought about by the ARC project is....."

Thank you very much for your time

c. MSDC method

Most Significant Difference Conversations

Undertaken with between 4 & 16 people

Requiring up to 30mins time

Materials – paper, range of writing & drawing implements, camera or smart phone with camera.

Step 1

- Split into groups of 2
- Talk about the difference the project has made and why? (people & nature)
- Each person draws a picture or writes to represent this
- Decide on one to take forward or combine

Step 2

- Create groups of 4
- Share the combined most significant differences
- Agree one to go forward or create a combined one

Step 3

- Create groups of 8
- Share the combined Most Significant Differences
- Agree one to go forward or create a combined one

Step 4

- Repeat process as many times as required to get to one group with one agreed Most Significant Difference.
- Ask someone to volunteer to be filed explaining what the most significant difference is and why.

Appendix 2: Achieving objectives

Aim 1: Promote a rich and thriving river system where wildlife flourishes and where people value and enjoy the landscape, natural and cultural heritage

Objective	Targets	Achievements
1A. Deliver a more robust and sustainable wetland ecosystem	<p>Restore and enhance 13km of river, enhance 3km chalk streams and 1.5km ditches</p> <p>Create 2ha fen habitat (0.9% Sussex BAP target)</p> <p>Create 2ha reedbed habitat (3% Sussex BAP target)</p> <p>Create 10 ponds</p> <p>Create 3ha floodplain woodland using at least 2,700 trees</p> <p>Restore 10ha species rich lowland meadow (12% Sussex BAP target)</p> <p>Create, maintain and improve a complex Habitat Potential Model to ensure that all wetland habitat restoration works are efficient, effective and in the appropriate geographical location.</p>	<p>UPPER ARUN 3.5km Upper Arun enhanced (within total length of 13.5km identified in the development phase as a priority)</p> <p>CHALKSTREAM 2.6km of rare chalk and greensand streams restored and re-naturalised; and a further 1.7 km of stream and river</p> <p>DITCHES At least 2.6 km of ditches were restored (Waltham Brooks)</p> <p>FEN 7 hectares of flowering fen, supporting a range of dragonflies, amphibians, and uncommon native plants such as tubular water dropwort</p> <p>REEDBED 600 metres reedbed and 0.5ha of marsh created at Pulborough Brooks reserve</p> <p>PONDS 23 ponds, with a surface area of over 10 ha</p> <p>FLOODPLAIN WOODLAND 5 ha of woodland were planted to help reduce flooding and soil erosion. 400 rare, native Black poplar trees planted</p> <p>MEADOW 16 hectares of wet and fen meadow - creating habitat for barn owls, bees and other pollinators, feeding grounds for rare bats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new site for the nationally rare Cut grass found , rare mosses recorded • Otters are back • Great diving beetle found in River Arun, Crosby Farm 2016. First one found in 30 years <p>HABITAT POTENTIAL MODEL created. This is a flexible tool which is maintained by SWT/SxBRC. There is a full report available. ARC funded various updates of the HPM model including incorporating climate change data.</p>
1B. Restoration of the Upper Arun River	<p>Improve habitat diversity for macro-invertebrates, fish and macrophytes by improving in-channel and bankside morphological variability</p>	<p>3.5km enhanced.</p> <p>Works to the river (summer and autumn 2015) included river narrowing, blackthorn coppicing, bank re-profiling, scrape excavation and the reconnection of a relic flood channel at Dedisham Manor.</p>

Objective	Targets	Achievements
	<p>Carry out at least one major and 10 minor enhancements to the river channel to achieve greater morphological variability, and increase connectivity of river with floodplain.</p> <p>Undertake at least five enhancements to the floodplain.</p>	<p>Beneficial changes in receiving ecology usually take 12-18 months after in-stream work to show marked improvements. Invertebrate kick sampling has been carried out at two sites within this project area.</p> <p>Benchmark / baseline sampling was carried out in Spring and Autumn 2015. Post works sampling was carried out in Autumn 2016.</p> <p>Contractors spraying and dead heading giant hogweed plants along 5km of the Upper Arun. This area was treated twice with the addition of Reach 1 in 2016.</p>
1C. Remove major obstructions to fish passage and improve fish stocks	<p>Remove or positively modify at least 2 major man-made obstructions to fish passage on the Arun or Rother rivers to allow migration of increased numbers of fish and fish species upstream</p> <p>Increase total number of fish and range of species upstream of areas where obstructions have been removed within life of the ARC project</p>	<p>5 sites removed or adapted to enable fish passage (A24 weir, Harsfold, Hardham, Arundel chalk stream and Fittleworth)</p> <p>The Hardham Baffle pass (ladder for fish) was the first of its type in Sussex, and we have since installed similar layouts at four other structures with two more in the pipeline. Eel pass at Hardham used by 1,826 elvers to swim upstream (in first season - May to Oct 2014)</p>
1D: Protect and increase the Arun Valley water vole population	<p>Confirm extant population size and distribution</p> <p>Extend range and distribution of water vole.</p> <p>Identifying at least ten locations where habitat enhancement would be beneficial to water voles</p> <p>Enhance viability of wetland networks through habitat enhancement and connectivity improvements (see Objectives 1A and 1B)</p> <p>Support Brighton University PhD research into population dynamics and factors affecting water vole populations</p> <p>Engage landowners in a catchment wide mink control programme to reduce predation pressure on water voles. At least 20 mink rafts, and one landowner training workshop</p>	<p>At least 50km of rivers surveyed for water voles. A student of Brighton University carried out a study to establish the presence of water voles, through sign surveys, across three sites within the Arun valley Arundel, Amberley and Pulborough Brooks. in summer 2014. 58% (N=44) ditches were occupied by water voles, 27% (N=21) ditches had latrines present. Within the Arun Valley water voles are breeding, 57.1% (N=12) latrines were present in Arundel. This survey has been a useful indicator of the current presence and reproductive situation of the water voles in the Arun Valley. (see full report)</p> <p>The known distribution of water voles has now been expanded for the catchment, and there are now records of water voles present in the Western Rother valley for the first time in 20 years. Various habitat enhancements have been carried out (see objective 1A and 1B) that will almost certainly have a positive impact on water voles.</p> <p>Rowenna Baker has completed and published a full PhD on the genetics and population dynamics of the water vole in the Arun valley and other locations in the South East. This project involved intensive survey and capture-mark-recapture work of key water vole populations throughout the central Arun valley.</p> <p>In addition, water vole surveyors were trained each year (2014, 2015, 2016) and surveys of water voles were carried out at multiple locations across the Arun & Western Rother valleys. ARC delivered a mink control workshop for landowners at Norfolk Estate August 4th 2014. 25 attendees. 21 mink rafts allocated. One of the landowners - Botany Bay have dispatched 8 mink.</p>
1E: Identify key locations for land management change and habitat enhancement in the	<p>Accurately survey and map grassland and wetland habitats within the 1/100 year floodzone</p> <p>Share data with landowners and Natural England so that land management prescriptions for individual land holdings can be altered in the future to benefit floodplain habitat management</p>	<p>Completed NVC Survey of the Arun and Western Rother River. The Arun NVC survey is now one of the most comprehensive habitat maps in the County. Covering the large majority of the extant floodplain of the Arun & Rother Valleys, we can now use the information gathered to inform future floodplain management.</p>

Objective	Targets	Achievements
Western Rother floodzone	Import data to SxBRC recorder databases and habitat mapping systems so that they can be interpreted and shared with other partners and landowner	
1F: Identify areas of wet heath within the catchment for restoration	Survey areas of wet heath in catchment and identify condition, particularly of lesser known sites Consult with land managers of at least five wet heath sites in project area to review opportunities for wet heathland restoration	Over 13 hectares of wet heath created /) restored helping species like the carnivorous sundew See NVC for areas surveyed (1E). Entomological survey carried out at Lavington Common
1G: Deliver dragonfly survey	Survey a minimum of 22km of Arun SSSI using contractors and volunteers to establish current status of dragonfly populations In particular, establish where possible an updated geographic distribution for club-tailed dragonfly Carry out at least 10 wetland enhancements which will benefit Arun valley dragonfly populations	Over 150km of rivers were surveyed for dragonflies. We confirmed that the Common Club tail is breeding in West Sussex (with only five other populations on UK rivers). Contracted Dave Sadler to complete Arun & Rother dragonfly survey report. 60km of catchment surveyed. A total of 27 species were recorded, including 11 damselfly and 16 dragonfly species. Volunteers also surveyed various locations throughout the catchment. Volunteers contributed 27 days of time valued at £2287 Arun dragonfly report noted wider distribution of Club-tailed dragonflies than previously recorded, as well as recording previously unknown behaviour such as mating and egg-carrying by the Common Clubtail. Contractor continued to survey in 2015 / 16 as a volunteer to update this picture. Multiple wetland enhancements were carried out across the ARC catchment as part of our core programme of work. All of these projects contribute to the expansion and enhancement of the available habitat network for dragonflies. The 'additional wetland habitat enhancements' that we delivered including a range of wader scrapes also contribute additional habitat to this network. 23 ponds, with a surface area of over 10 ha created (see 1A)
1H: Secure ARC legacy	Document the current ecological status of the catchment to inform future management strategies Produce a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) including a record of the conservation work undertaken as part of ARC and develop a 15 year programme to ensure benefits of work are maintained and further developed	A Conservation Management Plan was produced during the Development Phase which details key future management and maintenance activities / details management plans for key sites within the project area. Additionally ARC has been working with landowners of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and achieved a 16 % improvement in the proportion of LWS in positive conservation management.

Aim 2: Improve water quality and eliminate non-native invasive species

Objective	Targets	Achievements
<p>2A: Work with others to take steps to limit nutrient enrichment, pollution and sediment erosion into watercourses, standing open water and groundwater. Protect farmland and riverbanks from erosion and reduce pollutants in watercourses</p>	<p>Where possible, secure HLS agreements to assist landowners to change land management negatively affecting river and groundwater quality</p> <p>Work closely with Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer, EA Catchment Officer (Water Framework Directive) and water companies to help manage and reduce negative catchment influences on water quality</p> <p>Reduce land drainage on friable soils (such as heathlands) to limit soil erosion and run off, particularly in headstreams</p> <p>Create marginal (wetland) habitats and buffer strips to reduce land based run off into rivers. Follow up Himalayan balsam removal (see Objective 2B) with natural bank protection measures and tree planting where appropriate</p> <p>Work with urban communities to raise awareness about impacts of waste water disposal, urban surface water run-off and other urban water quality issues</p>	<p>9 New HLS schemes. 240 hectares now in conservation management.</p> <p>Work to improve water quality at the catchment scale is overseen by the Arun & Western Streams Catchment Partnership which has responsibility for driving delivery of the Catchment Plan which details a number of water quality improvement projects: http://arunwesternstreams.org.uk/plan</p> <p>Site managers and land owners will be encouraged to follow up with bank protection measures and tree planting at appropriate sites through liaison with the South Downs Invasives Taskforce (the legacy body for ongoing INNS work).</p> <p>The ARC project carried out engagement around water issues with two urban communities (Pulborough, 2014 and Midhurst, 2015). This included: desktop community mapping exercise, village hall 'water cafe' events with speakers and local food, data gathering via householder questionnaires and end of project reporting. 60 people attended the Pulborough event. 30 attended the Midhurst event. Feedback from 34 attendees from the Pulborough event was positive. 100% said they felt inspired to explore the catchment more or find out more about a particular issue.</p>
<p>Objective 2B: Locate and eradicate invasive non-native plant species</p>	<p>Identify key areas to be targeted for non-native invasive plant species management, specifically targeting protected sites, open water bodies (ponds and lakes) to map species such as New Zealand pygmy weed (<i>Crassula helmsii</i>), zones where complete eradication for high ecological benefit is possible, and key sources of invasive seed/plant material contamination</p> <p>Eradicate non-native invasive plant species from 2h of project area, 2km bankside and clear 5 open waterbodies identified in (i)</p>	<p>INNS management surveys conducted along water courses.</p> <p>9 target species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Fern • Floating Pennywort • Parrots Feather • Himalayan Balsam • NZ Pigmyweed • Japanese Knotweed • American mink • Giant Hogweed • American Skunk Cabbage <p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 9 Ha of Himalayan balsam cleared (3 sites cleared in 2016 season) • 3 sites cleared of American skunk cabbage • Cleared 1 site of floating pennywort

Objective	Targets	Achievements
	<p>Continue voluntary mapping and monitoring of all known locations of invasive species</p> <p>Encourage use of Plantracker App and use ARC App to help monitor invasive species</p> <p>Provide education, support and resources to local communities on non-native invasive species, their effects and their eradication. Hold 2 training days and train 2 local volunteer task forces (10 people).</p> <p>Produce GIS layer highlighting buffer areas and potential migration routes for key invasive plant species</p> <p>Work closely with Hampshire and Surrey to limit infestations of invasive aquatic plant species coming across County boundaries</p> <p>See 1D Target (vi) re mink control</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mink control project (SDNPA) in full swing with >26 mink rafts installed on the Western Rother • >11km of waterway treated for giant hogweed • 2 large stands of Japanese Knotweed under control (receiving long term treatment) • Long term treatment for all known floating pennywort sites • 1 pond cleared of parrots feather • 2 ponds cleared of New Zealand pigmyweed • Bio-control pilot project to • Control water fern – we released 12,000 North American Weevils on a section of canal. The water fern was cleared from the canal in 2 months <p>See invasive report for further detail. SBRC maps have been updated.</p> <p>ARC app 958 total downloads. See 4e for further detail. 108 Plant tracker records submitted for ARC 9 priority INNS species (8 plant and mink) – see SxBRC report</p> <p>Delivered 5 workshops focusing on 9 target INNS, their negative impacts and how they can be controlled. Feedback gathered from 58 people. Received positive feedback. The majority had not been to an ARC event before. See feedback form for more detail.</p> <p>ARC also worked with and trained 5 community conservation groups to tackle INNS. They have gone on to lead work parties.</p> <p>Funded INNS kit for Horsham District Council (HDC) and volunteers for future work parties. Also provided RSPB Pulborough Brooks with stem injection kit to tackle Japanese Knotweed.</p> <p>5 people have been trained through ARC on PA1/PA6 & PA6W (safe application of pesticides and near water) – to continue to tackle priority species after ARC has finished.</p> <p>429 volunteers, 3441 hours worked, 492 days worked, £25,349 sum value</p> <p>Nearly 900 have been engaged in the invasives programme including landowners, community groups, students, volunteers at conferences, meetings, training days and more. Please see invasive engagement list for more detail.</p> <p>Delivered 2 INNS workshops and 2 work parties in collaboration with Surrey Wildlife Trust</p> <p>Employed contractors (via SDNP) to control Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed on Upper Arun tributaries.</p>

Objective	Targets	Achievements
<p>2C: Protect and improve clean water resources and deliver flood storage to protect farmland and communities</p>	<p>Assess percentage of restored wetland habitat that will provide flood storage (regulating ecosystem service) (TBC)</p> <p>Assess percentage of restored wetland habitat that will filter sediments and pollutants and stop them entering watercourse e.g. reed beds (regulating ecosystem service)</p> <p>3 x annual workshop / conference on Ecosystem services with focus on water and rain gardens'. Primarily aimed at planners / developers / private sector.</p> <p>4 x small scale half-day workshop (30 people) for communities on rain gardens and green roofs in each of the four parish hubs within ARC project area. Dusty Gedge & Gary Grant to deliver</p> <p>Work with landowners to encourage positive land management on and around major groundwater aquifers through HLS and grant schemes</p>	<p>New partnership developed – SouthDowns Invasives Taskforce (SIT). SDNPA to lead group, working at the catchment scale. Surrey Wildlife Trust a partner.</p> <p>Delivered two conferences – Ecosystem services conference at Brighton University (Yr1) and end of ARC conference at Arundel Castle (Yr3) 342 people attended the two events. Keynote speakers Caroline Lucas (Ecosystem Services Conference) and Helen Meech from Rewilding Britain (Arundel)</p> <p>73 attendees completed feedback forms for ecosystem services conference. 36% had travelled 21+miles for the conference. 91% learned something new about the benefits of ecosystem services (see feedback for further detail)</p> <p>Dusty Gedge and Gary Grant from Green Infrastructure Consultancy attended numerous community events and meetings with local people to promote rain gardens including Water Matters Pulborough and Midhurst events, Ecosystem Services and Arundel conferences. Almost 500 people engaged in total.</p> <p>See 2a for HLS. 9 New HLS schemes. 240 hectares now in conservation management. These have a combined value of £605K (valuable match funding to the project and a first for a major HLF project).</p> <p>GRANTS (wetland enhancements and community habitat enhancements) 43 projects supported through our grants programme (16 landowners, 13 community groups, 8 schools, 3 parish councils, 1 NGO)</p>

Aim 3: Work with people to protect, restore and reconnect wildlife habitats

Objective	Targets	Achievements
<p>3A: Increase the number of people engaging with the environment through various initiatives</p>	<p>Improve people's awareness of wildlife and habitats in the catchment</p> <p>Increase uptake to HLS schemes or similar schemes</p> <p>Promote continued progress on individual HLS schemes, by contacting 50% of those already part of HLS to establish progress on individual schemes and motivate continued compliance</p> <p>Increase number of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI, local wildlife sites) that are assessed as being in "positive conservation management"</p> <p>Encourage local communities to engage with 50 small wetland habitat enhancements and 15 community habitat enhancements</p> <p>Work with local communities to eradicate and control non-native invasive species</p>	<p>6 x landowner workshops / best practice site visits delivered (catchment event, woodlands for water, how to identify invasive species x 2, SNCI and Bignor landowner event). 226 attendees in total.</p> <p>34 people completed feedback forms for catchment event. 93% learned something new about natural or cultural heritage of arun and rother valleys. 100% felt inspired to explore the catchment more or find out about a particular issue.</p> <p>See 2b for invasive feedback and engagement</p> <p>See HLS 2a.</p> <p>Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) Now referred to as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)</p> <p>SBRC carried out an analysis. It's a good result: The ARC project has achieved a 16 % improvement in the proportion of LWS in positive conservation management, if you compare against what the state of LWS in this area would have been, without ARC. See report for further detail.</p> <p>See grants 2c for wetland habitats enhancements and 15 community habitat enhancements</p> <p>See 2b for invasive</p>
<p>3B: Create links between landowners and the community</p>	<p>Undertake 6 no. guided farm walks within ARC project area</p>	<p>23 walks in total including 3 farm walks, 2 dragonfly walks, 3 foraging walks and 5 butterfly walks (1 on a farm) and 10 community walks. 448 attendees in total.</p> <p>22 Feedback forms gathered for 3x foraging walks. 81% had travelled 10 or more miles. 77% learnt something new about the natural or cultural heritage of the Arun and Rother valleys. 100% felt inspired to explore the catchment / countryside more to find out more about a particular issue.</p>

Aim 4: Better connect the community to the catchment, through access improvements, engagement opportunities and interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the project area.

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4A: Provide volunteer opportunities equating to 1,000+ person days	Deliver opportunities for volunteers equating to 1,000+ person days	<p>1119 volunteers gave 1990 volunteer days or 5.5 years of their time to the project, exceeding our volunteering target.</p> <p>Positive feedback via email from Arundel thankyou event 2015 (see dropbox).</p>
4B: Engage children with wetland environment with improved understanding of wetlands and importance of saving water	<p>Develop curriculum-linked resource pack on the Arun and Rother and distribute to 80+ schools in the catchment area</p> <p>Lead 10 field trips for schools to their local stretch of river</p> <p>Improve understanding of the importance of wetlands and rivers through six interactive Outreach school visits</p> <p>Promote "eels in schools" project to at least six schools</p>	<p>RESOURCE PACK Developed Arun and Rother River Explorer resource pack and four case studies. The resource pack was downloaded to a disk and posted to 120 schools within the project area and also schools across the South Downs National Park. The resource pack and case studies are also available for download via www.arunwesternstreams.org.uk/learning</p> <p>We even had an enquiry from a school outside the project area in Berkshire who were delighted to get a copy.</p> <p>FIELD TRIPS We led 11 field trips for seven schools (St Catherines Primary Littlehampton, Arundel CE Primary, NorthChapel Primary Petworth, Northholmes Junior Horsham, St Mary's CE Horsham, White Meadows Primary Littlehampton and Duncton CofE Petworth) at 5 sites (Botany Bay, Chesworth Farm, Coultershaw Heritage Site and Beam Pump, Arundel Musuem and Midhurst Rother College)</p> <p>Feedback from teachers and pupils: An amazing day which enhanced the children's knowledge of rivers. (Arundel CE Primary, Hayley Meyer)</p> <p>I learnt the most extraordinary things like which 'creatures live in a pond' and that a 'manmade waterfall is called a weir'. My favourite thing that we did was the field sketch (I had never done one before). Sophie, student at Northolmes primary</p> <p>OTTER OUTREACH We delivered 7 otter and water vole discovery sessions to four schools at Chesworth Farm, Horsham (Holbrooks Primary Horsham, Loxwood Primary Billingshurst, Holy Trinity Primary Horsham and Heronway Primary Horsham)</p> <p>EELS We were unable to take the eels project forward as the supplier had overcommitted in year one. We tried to contact the supplier on a number of occasions in year two but were unsuccessful. We instead used the funds to purchase signed copies of 'Think of an Eel' from author Karen Wallace and sent to 80 primary schools in the project area/ South Downs National Park (along with ARC resource pack).</p> <p>FOREST SCHOOLS Trained eight teachers and one community group leader from six schools and one community group (Plastow and Kirdford, Rainbows preschool, Shelley primary, Graffham,</p>

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		<p>East Preston, St Phillips and Horsham Matters) on the forest schools programme. 1 completed level one, 4 level two and 4 level three.</p> <p>WILDLIFE CAMERA Three schools have borrowed our wildlife camera to observe animals on their school grounds (Amberley Primary, Slindon Primary and Seaford Head). The camera recorded a number of small birds, pheasants, foxes, hedgehogs, rabbits, a badger and deer. A student from Seaford College used the camera as part of his John Muir award.</p> <p>We directly engaged with 20 schools and one community group (river field trips, forest schools, otter outreach, wildlife camera). We reached approximately 500 young people (river field trips and otter outreach). We have no meaningful way of measuring the number of young people reached now and into the future from the forest school training.</p> <p>LEGACY All four river field trip sites will continue to operate and be available for outdoor education activities by local schools after the ARC project ends supported by the resource pack and site case studies. For example Coultershaw Trust volunteers were trained to deliver field trips in year one and are already independently delivering these sessions to local schools.</p> <p>Through our grants programme we helped a local site develop an outdoor site for education. ARC funded a beautiful bridge and a dipping platform, at Botany Bay. They had their first school visit (Duncton Primary) in June 2016 for an ARC led river field trip. The site will be used by local schools for years to come.</p> <p>One of our wildlife cameras was entered into our app competition. A student of St James Primary in Coldwaltham won the camera for their school. It will be used to record wildlife on school grounds.</p> <p>The other camera will be donated to a local wildlife organisation.</p>
<p>4C: Investigate historic land-use of project area through oral history</p>	<p>Provide equipment and training for 5 volunteers to learn oral history collection and transcription</p> <p>Support volunteers to collate 10 oral histories from long term residents of ARC project area describing land use changes and changes in flooding etc.</p>	<p>Delivered 6 training sessions (2 per year). 15 volunteers trained to record oral histories. At the end of each year volunteers and narrators were invited to an end of year exhibition to view sound clips, excerpts and images from their oral history.</p> <p>Captured 24 oral history recordings from 24 people from across the project area and surrounding landscape. Narrators include; farmers, landowners, artists, conservationists, community group leaders, retirees and local business owners).</p> <p>Topics discussed – childhood memories, the war, river maintenance past and present, art inspired by the local landscape (including painting, photography, writing, willow sculptures) flooding, community events, farming practices, landscape changes and wildlife.</p> <p>See catchment website http://arunwesternstreams.org.uk/projects/arc for excerpts</p>

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	Provide edited excerpts of oral histories for web download and interpretation	Legacy – The recordings will be stored at the West Sussex Records Office for future generations to enjoy. Additionally the oral history images (A3 boards) that were produced for the final exhibition at Arundel Castle have all been distributed to participants as a legacy gift. Pulborough library will display two.
4D: Connect the community with their natural and cultural heritage through access improvements	<p>Create 6 new way-marked walks in the project area</p> <p>Install new interpretation boards and signage at key points</p> <p>Improve physical access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burton Mill Pond - disabled access - Waltham Brooks - interpretation board and boardwalks - Pulborough Brooks - disabled access, pond-dipping platform, new trails, improved access to hides, new visitor/school shelter and interpretation, minibeast areas, improved wildlife viewing adjacent to nature trail, improved volunteer welfare facilities and access to toilets at halfway point of nature trail 	<p>Given that the app (and app mobile website) had capability to include walking trails, and that project partners already have a number of published trails on their websites (e.g. WSCC and SDNP) it was decided to focus efforts and resources elsewhere. The Project provided funding to the Sussex Butterfly Atlas which would make a valuable contribution to ARC's legacy by encouraging people to explore the wonderful butterfly sites in the ARC project area (and beyond) long after the project ends.</p> <p>Interpretation boards have been installed at various locations explaining enhancements or natural heritage value including Waltham Brooks, Meadowside Storrington, Graffham Down and two rain garden sites (Horsham and Littlehampton).</p> <p>All Physical access improvements completed at Burton Mill Pond, Waltham Brooks and Pulborough Brooks (as per detail in Framework)</p>
4E: Connect the community with their natural and cultural heritage through engagement activities	Deliver taster days: three angling events, three canoeing events and six bushcraft events. 10 participants per event	<p>Angling – Delivered three events in partnership with two angling clubs (Petworth and Bognor angling club and Pulborough angling club). We engaged 35 young people aged 8 – 13. Following involvement with ARC Petworth and Bognor Angling Club have delivered their own angling taster day. In total xx completed feedback forms, xx% had fun, xx% would like to get out more into nature</p> <p>Tracy, mother of Olly and Isaac said “ Neither of the boys will forget their angling in a hurry, and are really keen to get out there again -so thank you for the opportunity for them to do something they wouldn't otherwise have had the chance to do. We'll no doubt join either that club or the local one here, once we get the rest of the summer break out of the way.”</p> <p>Canoeing – Delivered 6 events (two per year) at Southwater Country park in partnership with Southwater watersports centre. We engaged 71 young people aged 7 – 16. In total 45 completed feedback forms, 98% had fun, 82% would like to get out more into nature</p> <p>Bushcraft – Sussex wildlife Trust delivered six events (two per year) at Tilgate Country Park, Horsham. We engaged 64 young people aged 7 – 13. In total 48 completed feedback forms, 100% had fun, 92% would like to get out more into nature</p>

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	<p>Carry out six community river clean-up events</p> <p>Increase communities' awareness of ARC project and how they can be involved through use of website, newsletters, online surveys, community talks and presentations, landowner events, training courses, competitions</p> <p>Promote engagement with natural and cultural heritage by younger audiences through Smartphone/mobile browsing technologies</p> <p>Two water cafe events to be held as part of the sustainable household water use engagement programme (see above Obj 2A)</p> <p>The oral history project will train 30 volunteers over the three years to deliver a minimum of two interviews each on various themes that will contribute to the aim of connecting people with the local natural and cultural heritage</p>	<p>Photography workshops – Delivered nine photography workshops at two locations (WWT Centre Arundel and RSPB Pulborough Brooks). The workshops were led by Wildlife and landscape photographer John Dominick (ARC Volunteer). We engaged 88 young people aged 5 – 25. John is keen to continue the workshops at RSPB Pulborough Brooks when the project ends. In total 64 completed feedback forms, 98% had fun, 86% would like to get out more into nature. In total we engaged 258 young people on our taster days and photography workshops.</p> <p>River cleanups – 5 river cleanups and 1 beach clean (4 in Horsham, 1 in Storrington and 1 in Littlehampton). 67 volunteers contributed 313 hours, 44 days a value of £2,938 to the project.</p> <p>Website updated regularly with news, events, blogs etc. We produced 10 newsletters during both development and delivery phases.</p> <p>Created ARC Explorer (free app) to encourage people to explore the landscape and record species that they found - 958 total downloads during life of the app. Launched two competitions to engage primary school students and adults. A student at Coldwaltham primary school won the Under 16 category winning a wildlife recording camera for his school. He recorded 56 different species using the app.</p> <p>Also increased awareness of the project nationally through being shortlisted for three national awards (winning the Campaign for National Parks Park protector award and ‘highly commended’ at the Charity Awards). The former resulted in delivering a speech at the House of Commons to a delegation of around 100 people about the project and its achievements.</p> <p>See 4c oral history project</p> <p>See 2a water cafe events</p>