

The Rother Valley has a new Farmer Group working together to deliver nature conservation.



The Arun & Rother Rivers Trust (ARRT), the organisation that helps to protect and enhance the Rivers Rother and Arun and wider catchment, is pleased to announce that the recent Rother Valley Farmer Group (RVFG) application to the Natural England Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund has been successful.

The Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund Grant provides financial support for groups of farmers that come together to work out the best ways to improve the natural environment across their land. Countryside Stewardship is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas.

There are now 98 groups working across England with the common goal of better delivering environmental improvements on their land. This now means that over 450,000 hectares of holdings in England are delivering landscape scale actions for water management and wildlife. Farming Minister George Eustice recently commented in a Defra press release that the Farm Facilitation Fund is “contributing to an important step change in nature conservation by encouraging and supporting people who bring farmers, foresters and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale.”



Heath End Stream: a tributary along the main River Rother

The Rother Valley Farmers will now receive funding for working together and sharing knowledge to benefit farming and the environment to improve the Rother Valley landscape. A total of 29 farms have signed up to the RVFG covering almost 8000 hectares along the Rother Valley. The scheme is adaptive and open to new farmers who might like to become involved as the scheme progresses.

Rother Valley Farmer member and ARRT Trustee Richard Chandler said: ‘So pleased the Rother valley farmers group has been successful, it will be so good for the wildlife and water quality to have farmers working together; sharing ideas and their success monitored and highlighted. Well done’.



The development of the RVFG bid was funded through money raised by the ARRT, with additional funds and support provided by the South Downs National Park Authority, the Arun & Western Streams Catchment Partnership and Southern Water, which the Trust kindly acknowledges.

ARRT Chairman Charlie Baker said: 'The trustees are very pleased that the Rother Valley Farmers Group has been successful in its bid for the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund Scheme. "Farmers across the Rother Valley will see the rewards of working together to reduce silting and pollution of the rivers and streams and will benefit from the resulting improvement in water quality'. Should other Farmers feel inspired to join the

Group, please contact us to discuss the benefits".

Main Rother: Partnership project to deliver a fenced cattle drink and fish refuge area at Shopham Bridge

The RVFG will be farmer-led with the aim of delivering land management that is sympathetic with the river environment. The main group Facilitator is Mr. Colin Hedley who also manages the nearby 'Arun to Adur' farmers group and has many years of relevant Countryside Stewardship experience, alongside Mrs. Ses Wright, a Project Officer of the ARRT since 2010 with a wide knowledge of the local river and wetland environment, and Mrs. Tracy Thurlow (ARRT Administrator with many years of relevant environmental experience), as well as the wider support of the Trustees.

If you would like further information or would like to participate as a volunteer, please contact the Arun and Rother Rivers Trust at www.rrt.org.uk

Photograph References: Ses Wright ARRT.

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