

Headline Summary (202 words)

This community led initiative was first implemented in October 2023 after Storm Agnes (September) and again in November after Storm Babet (October). In both cases, excess surface storm water was channelled with such force from the main Thames Water drain, through the Lye Brook that it destroyed the sides of the brook, gushed through the golf course, and threatened to flood roads to the south of Florence Park.

In the aftermath of both storms, Lye Valley volunteers acting as “human beavers” created log dams in the Lye brook to slow the flow of the water. In many places along the Lye brook hand woven willow fences to strengthen the sides of the brook have had to be rebuilt to prevent total collapse. This essential ongoing work prevents flooding further south. During the floods of 2014 Campbell Road OX4 flooded and many people suffered appalling losses and destruction to their property.

The Lye Valley volunteers did not really sign up for this type of work. They are local people who love the valley. They come to rake, and cut back the reeds, in order to keep the valley open to ensure the continued survival of rare flora and fauna.