

# Who is responsible for watercourses?

Martin Hutchings  
Flood & Coastal Risk Manager



Kate Pearson  
Flood Resilience Advisor











**Owning a  
watercourse**

**Your  
responsibilities**

**Where to get  
advice**

**We'll cover these topics**

# What is a watercourse ?!

- Any river, stream, channel or ditch (wet or dry)
- Some are even piped and culverted





# Who owns a watercourse?



Source: Living With Water, Devon County Council

# Owners: your responsibilities

Report an incident:

- flooding
- blockages
- pollution
- unusual changes to flow of water
- collapsed or badly damaged banks

Incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60

# Owners: your responsibilities

- Let water flow naturally
- Prevent pollution
- Protect wildlife
- Maintain bed and banks



# Manage flood risk: rules and responsibilities

- Main rivers
- Other watercourses
- If the tide affects your watercourse
- Culverts
- Planning permission
- Landowner permission
- Removing water, building or altering a dam or weir
- Protected areas and species



# Legislation for the management of a watercourse

## Main rivers

- Regulated by Environment Agency

## Ordinary Watercourses

- Regulated by the Local Authorities

# Where to get advice

## Environment Agency

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse#owners-your-responsibilities>

## Devon County Council

- <https://new.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/question/riparian-owner-responsibility/>
- Advice leaflet: Living With Water



# Thank you

Any questions?