

love our Ouse

**Community Mapping
River Festival
September 25th 2022**



Overview

Love our Ouse delivered their first community mapping exercise at the River Festival at the Railway Land, Lewes. The activity ran for 6 hours (11-5pm) during an open, free event suitable for all. Around 1500 people attended the event day in total and is likely to consist predominantly of local residents from Lewes and the district.



Aims and purpose

- Gauge and understand how people interact and connect with their river
- Build a picture of what's important to people
- Identify and build upon key features of the river
- Create a means for identifying problems & solutions
- Identify and sign up interested people/groups to get involved
- Help prioritise, link up & focus learning areas and actions

The mapping consisted of 7 large A0 sized laminated maps of the entire length of the River Ouse and surrounding land 2km each side of the river with tributaries included for limited stretches where they meet the Ouse.

Features added to maps:

- The route and key tributaries were highlighted by pathways of coloured dot stickers
- Key town and village names identified by stickers
- photos of specific places added next to their location

Method of delivery:

The exercise was delivered by a rota of volunteer facilitators with Love our Ouse staff guidance and visual prompts in the form of printed sheets next to the maps. Public were invited to contribute entries by writing on post it notes and sticking them directly to the maps.

128 post it note contributions

A large majority of contributions are assumed to be by different people.



Main theme groupings - The most interrelated themes grouped together and in order of abundance

Location Specific

Interactions

Emotive response/personal perspective/reflection

Nature

Solutions & Aspirations

Memories

Problems

Three pillars

Celebrate

Entries include memories, emotive/appreciation comments, things people do recreationally

Learn

Includes historical, cultural, heritage, questions and areas to potentially learn more about

Act

Includes activities people do (recreation), ways to improve river, problems identified, aspirations

Descriptive words people used

spiritual

home

long

celebrate

flowing fast

memories

hidden

sacred

launch

chute

flew

honking

safely

dredged

working

abounds

heart shaped

flow

wild flow

dreaming

my church

nature heaven

blessed

secret delight

life

bank

massive

escaping

stomach

problems

water

clean

septic

cut

lifeblood

growth

catch

essential

priority

dipping

diving

jumping

paddle

polluted

protected

blessing

Emotive words people used

lovely

lucky

love

like

favourite

magical

great

wonderful

beautiful

perfect

best

sacred

enjoyed

enjoy

better

stunning

Species

Newts

Frogs

Beavers

Ninja

Fish

Dragonflies

Kingfisher (most entries!)

Osprey

Minnows

Peregrine Falcon

Mullet

Egret

Cormorants

Gulls

Bats (Daubentons?)

White-legged Damselflies

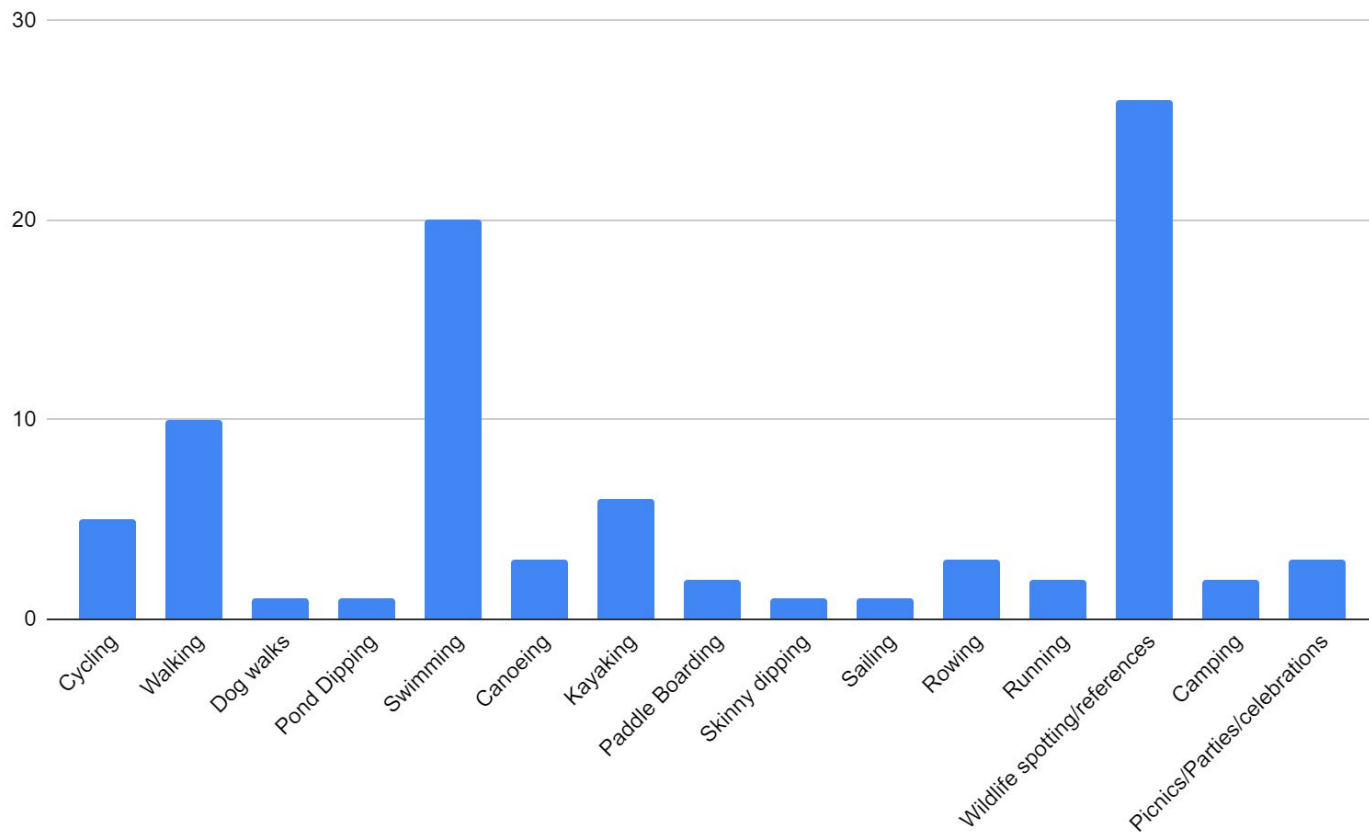
Swans

Bootlace eels

Butterflies

Seals

Recreational use



Types of Problems identified

Frequency

Sewage

2

Pollution

2

Flooding

3

General comments about being unsafe to swim

1

Agricultural run off

1

Concern over loosing river history

1

Fracking

1

Litter

1

Septic tank

1

Summary

- The denser areas of comments are at high public use locations e.g. Barcombe Mills and Piddinghoe. These include on/in water activities. Also include more pollution/sewage based comments
- Upper Ouse comments are few. Mostly walking/Ouse Valley Way
- More cycling, boating/kayak/canoing/swimming comments in Lower Ouse
- Themes overlap -often over 3-4 at one time and usually consist of a **specific place**, how they **interact** and an **emotional response**. Often includes **wildlife references** too. It's all about specific experiences and **connections** with place/nature that are most significant to people!
- Comments are very positive overall - celebratory
- Solutions/Aspirations include improvements to amenities/water quality to enhance recreational use, suggestions of actions others should take (rather than what they can or are taking)
- Problem and solutions were few with pollution and flooding are the top concern areas
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- Few heritage entries

What's missing and why

- Least number of contributions for identifying 'Problems'. Is this because we didn't press for this through facilitation, aren't interested or don't know it's state?
- Doesn't include much about what people are doing to tackle problems
- Doesn't include much about what people would like to learn about
- Doesn't include specific location problems spotted
- Doesn't identify many 'groups' or 'organisations' doing stuff in specific places that people could link in with
- Very few fish mentioned!

Development

- Need to label the tributary names on the maps
- A sheet with a 'key' and a few key basic facts
- Add more key features such as weirs, treatment works, historic features (?)
- How to record **exact** locations e.g. if someone points out something on the map for a very specific place which is an important detail?
- Add more photos next to locations
- Need to be able to have/link names/people with comments. And contact details to follow up on back of comments?
- Better way of identifying people/groups that want to get involved or are already doing stuff
- Comments be written on a duplicate/triplicate pad with contact details added to the 2nd leaf, 1st leaf goes on the map? Then we'd have comments and contacts for each? Or bigger post it's for a bit more detail on entries
- Clearer brief/training for facilitation to encourage more even spread between three pillar themes
- Identify groups/orgs/initiatives people could link in with?
- Add features people have identified? E.g. pubs, campsites, shute, species spotted
- How to capture what people don't know