

Lavant Potentials Chichester City Centre

18th September 2020

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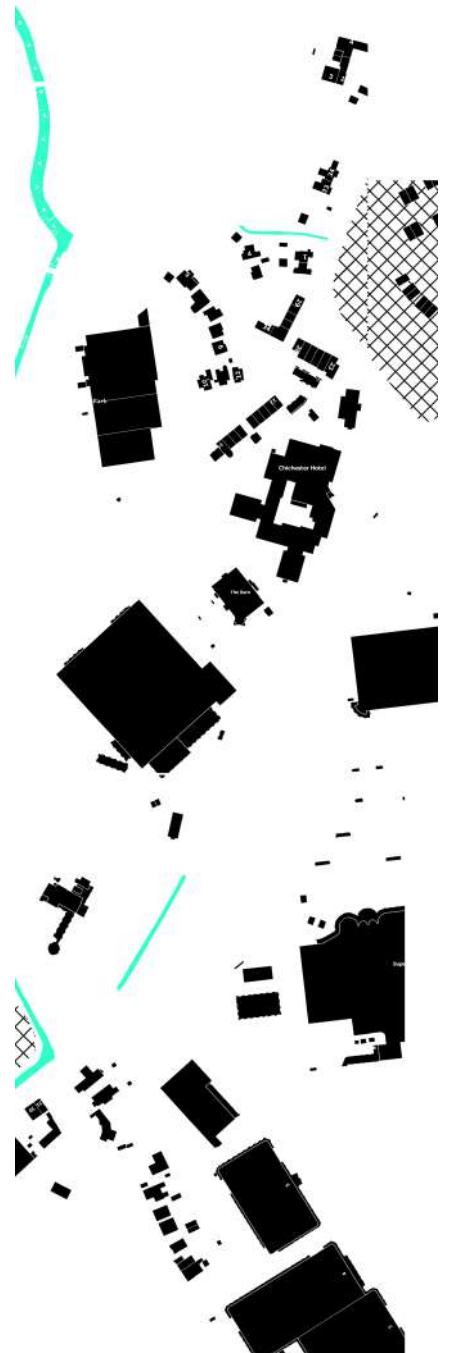
Component Key

- 1 Mill Arm
- 2 Barnfield and Harold
- 3 Lidl East
- 4 Lidl South
- 5 Story Road Westhampnett Road
- 6 Bridge Road - St Pancras
- 7 Riverside
- 8 Tozer - Culvert
- 9 St Pancras/Market Avenue Culvert
- 10 Bastions
- 11 South Gate Culvert
- 12 South Bastions
- 13 de Chartes
- 14 Chichester College
- 15 Terminus Road

Section 1 Mill Arm

The canalisation of the eastern river course here is steep and heavily engineered but tells a very clear story about the Lavant's historic purpose and current flood control. There are opportunities to reveal and celebrate the river course;

- Marking it's crossing at Barnfield Drive.
- Altering bank steepness and alignment at the Staine Street/ Madgwick lane roundabout.
- The bridging of Sadlers Close
- Opening up views to the mill through the planting adjacent to the Highway
- Making a specific destination event at the sluice at the branch bifurcation



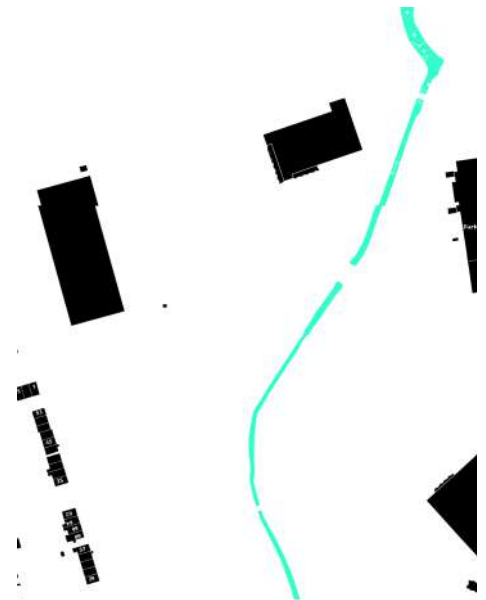
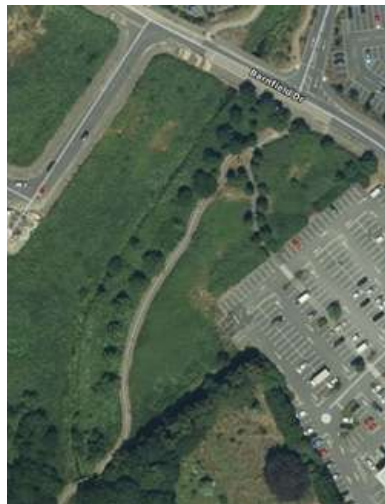
Section 2 Barnfield and Harold

The sluice marks the start of the Lavant through Chichester and could be celebrated as a feature point. The lavant is in a straight steep trapezoidal channel, the ecological value of this can be improved by;

- Lowering the bank gradient
- Creating multiple channels
- Creating a pool
- The triangle behind Aldi might be an appropriate location for this.
- Assume action unlikely until the redevelopment of the Aldi site

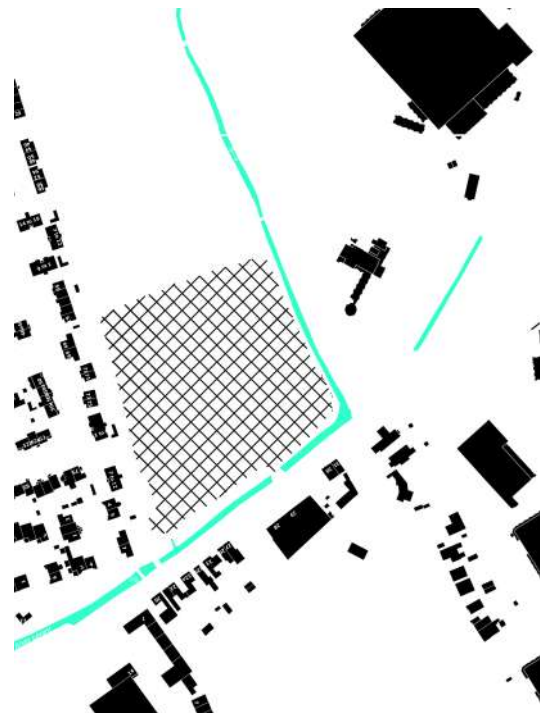
Obvious location for future development bank and line alterations should be built into the development brief

Rive line subsumed into Crematorium grounds, review ownership and boundary treatments. River course alignment and bank alterations would benefit the ecological potential



Section 3 Lidl East

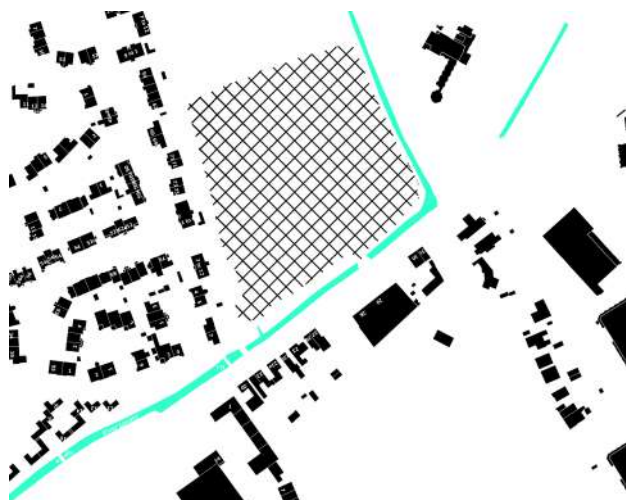
There remains a clear possibility to relax bank angles and widen the course of the Lavant upstream of the new culvert. This would significantly improve the visual presence of the water course in a way that has been lost with the introduction of the new engineering works. Works such as the introduction of gravel to the bed of the culvert should be considered to improve the connectivity of habitats.



Section 4 Lidl South

Recently developed. Tree cover lost, stream deeply incised and appearing to damage Westhampnett Road. Opportunity for stream realignment and bank angle amendments lost for the time being. Significant loss to quantum of tree replacement. Historic bridge still present though overgrown. Well proportioned pedestrian cycle route newly constructed ends abruptly at the western boundary.

Could retro fit new alignment (away from Westhampnett Road) and wider course and significantly increase habitat and tree planting in open space.



Section 5 Story Road/Westhampnett

Lidl cycle way continues to Story Road, bridge link to Westhampnett road is narrow and poorly aligned. Hedge and chain link corridor between road and river edge.

Continue cycleway on Story Road, install new oblique bridge at western termination of public open space on Story Road. Remove hedge to increase visibility of river course, remove chain link to broaden path to suitable cycleway width.

Assess ownership close to bridge where encroachment appear to be underway.

Celebrate the bridging point and facilitate cycleway crossing to south side of Westhampnett Road.



Section 6 Bridge Road/Westhampnett/ St Pancras

Establish cycle route on south side of Westhampnett Road, should the St James corner development come forward require river side cycle access within any development plan. Cross the river as far east as feasible and run cycleway along Bridge Road.

Open up some of the vegetation on this stretch and replace the concrete rail detail with a more expressive edge feature.

Additional bridges on this stretch will emphasise the river and make pleasant stopping points.

The connection to Riverside is blocked by a substation, there is a case here to make a wide bridge over the river to allow connectivity to Riverside until the substation is replaced/removed.



Section 7 Riverside

Riverside section is a steep banked, straight trapezoidal channel. There is scope for bank realignment and section changes whilst developing an effective cycle route in this location.

There is scope for redevelopment, infilling and densification in this area to the benefit of the river access corridor.

The bridge/rubbish screen is not expressive of the river environment and creates an obstacle for fauna.



Section 8 Tozer to Culvert

A very private section tightly developed on the north bank with the opportunity to stitch together a cycle pedestrian route along the south bank connecting Tozer to Weskins Way and thence to the Amphitheatre Park.

Little to no opportunity for safe access along the river from Weskins Way onward.

Needlemakers bridge does not allow any recognition of the rivers presence.

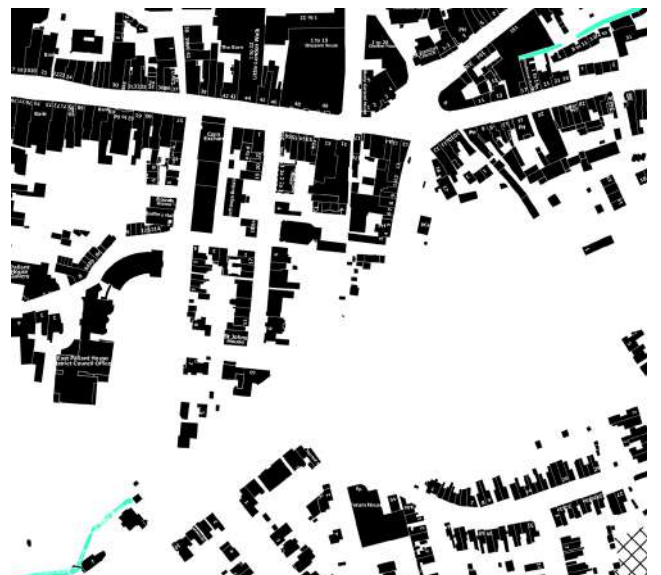
Any future redevelopment of the Kwik Fit site should build river daylighting into the brief.



Section 9 St Pancras/Market Avenue Culvert

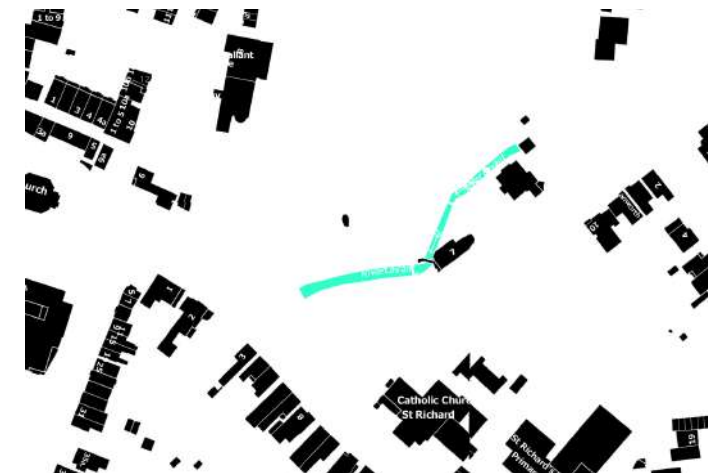
From KwikFit to the Market Walls residence the Lavant is in culvert this area was once a defining feature of the entrance to Chichester City powering mills and acting as a moat.

There is an opportunity to open up the rivers course to daylighting in the car parks north of Market Avenue, or redirect to a new course along the northern edge of the cattlemarket car park to act as a swale collecting and filtering surface water run off.



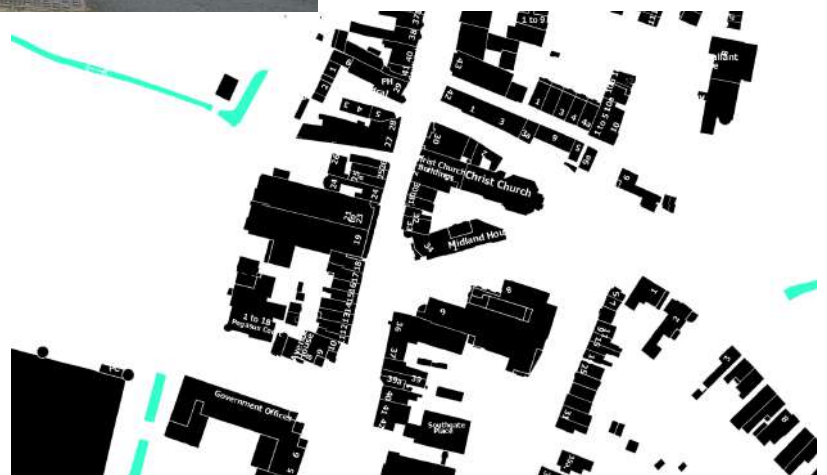
Section 10 Bastions

This section is open but not viewable in private gardens. A short section between Market Avenue and the carpark is visible and appears to be in private ownership. The section could be made more visible and accessible with the lower of the northern boundary wall or replacement with railings. The rivers course could be opened up within the car park. This could form the basis of a new park to replace the car park



Section 11 South Gate Culvert

This culverted section untraceable potential to open sections with grating to mark route and introduce light. Potential to mark route with paving elements.



Section 12 South Bastions

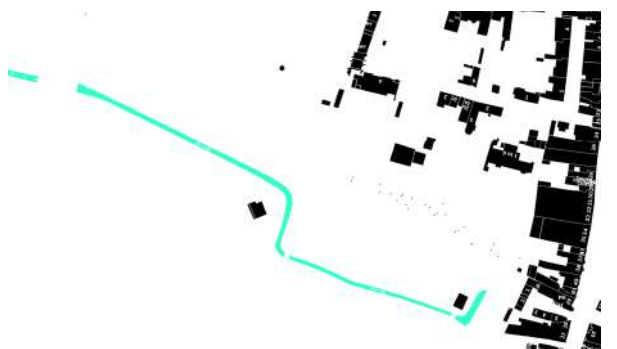
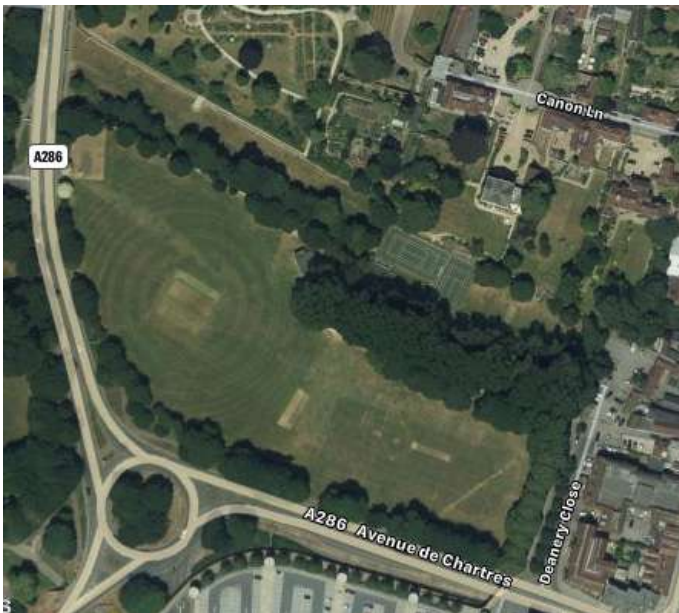
The South Bastions represent one of the greatest opportunities to provide enhanced legibility, character and ecological benefit along the river.

The tree belt between the Prebendal playing fields and the wall circuit could be significantly managed to allow views through to the wall from both the footpath and the Avenue de Chartres.

The Overhanging trees, substation and associated bridge would benefit from some care and maintenance making the river and asset rather than a detracting feature in this location.

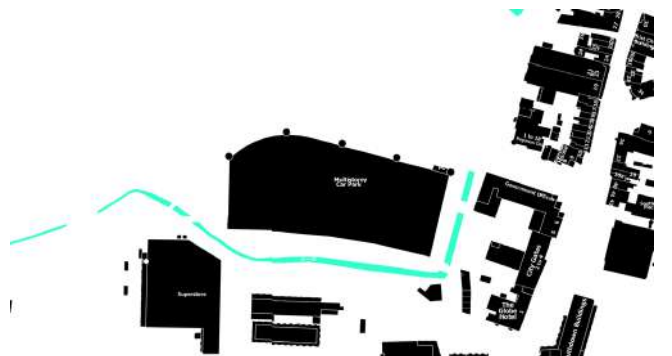
The introduction of weirs and the recirculation of water in this area would serve to maintain the rivers ecology and identity through the dry summer months.

In consultation with the land owners there are significant opportunities for bank re-grading and channel modification



Section 13 de Chartes

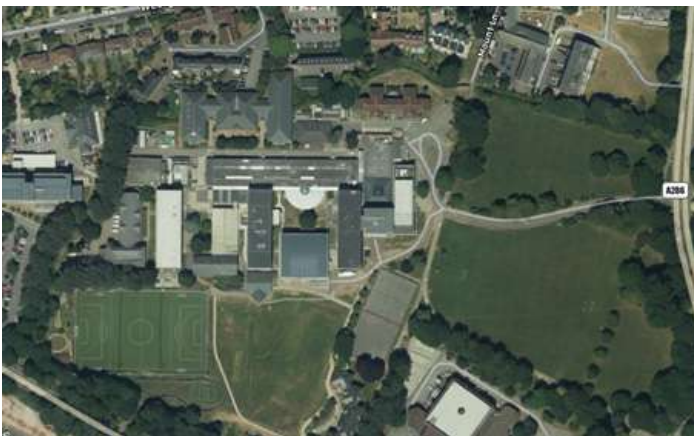
The bifurcation of the stream at Deanery Close sets the southern section in culvert to a point south of Avenue de Chartres. The stream exists east to the carpark in an engineered concrete channel [and proceeds to a bridged steep corner on the northern edge of the station car park. This gravel bottom section sets a very positive character for the footpath cycle way which connects past the carpark to the West Gate leisure centre. The bridging of the river by the car park is well done though with subtle attention given to detailing however the adjacent vegetation is ill maintained. The low banked channel with a clear bed is a good model to following in managing other stretches of the river.



Section 14 Chichester College

The Chichester College section of the river can be simply divided into three specific and very different character zones. To the east the river is in a trapezoidal channel. Here the course can be widened and the bank angles eased with detriment to the college grounds. The middle section is hidden between housing and college properties and for a large section culverted beneath a large floor plate building. For estate character and the benefit of the river building over the course should be avoided wherever possible and where built over the future development of the site should involve the uncovering of the river and improvements in course habitat.

The third section with shallow banks, a gravel bed and frequent flow is probably the best habitat section of the river and could usefully be made a greater feature by reviewing the adjacent treatments of car park and astroturf courts and further signaling the connection to the fitness trail south of the astroturf cages.



Section 15 Terminus Road

The river takes two distinct routes through the Terminus Road Industrial estate. Both sections are in highly engineered trapezoidal channels. Any future development adjacent to these channels should seek to widen the channels and lower the gradient of the banks to provide habitat opportunities



Impact actions

Establish Ownership

Establish Vegetation and little management (volunteer Group)

- 1 Lidl South and East vegetation management, bank relaxation.
- 2 Bridge Connection and hedge removal Story Road
- 3 Bridge Road/Riverside Link
- 4 Tozer/St Agnes Link
- 5 Cattle Market Car Park Swale
- 6 South Bastions vegetation management, bank relaxing and water re-circulation
- 7 Chichester College vegetation management, bank relaxation.



1 Lidl South and East

Prior to redevelopment the confluence of the two branches of the Lavant presented one of the most engaging views of the river. The clear waters of the chalks stream were clearly visible and the variations of the water flow clearly marked the changing season of the chalk stream character. The location of the views made a clear announcement of the river and environmental quality of the city.

The redevelopment scheme has seen a roundabout and enabling engineering placed over the river removing it from view and marking the position with forms and alignments that neither recognize nor express the rivers presence and entirely write out the visual contribution the river made to the city approach at this point. The opportunity was not taken to improve the rivers ecological or cultural value, address the obvious structural problems of the Westhamnett Road embankment or replace the lost tree cover along the corridor.

Potential Actions

- 1 Reduce the bank angle of the river on the Lidl and crematorium side
- 2 Replace low visual quality railing with more appropriate fixtures
- 3 Realign river course north from Westhamnett Road
- 4 introduce access points to the river edge on the Lidl side for visual engagement.

Lessons

The recent development appears to have been consented on the basis of weak environmental ambitions. Clear opportunities for improvement have been lost for decades. This apparent lack of quality environmental design input can be remedied by Design Review by a competent authority with consent contingent on net gain environmental improvements in all aspect.



2 Bridge Connection and Hedge Removal Story Road

The abrupt termination of the footpath on the Lidl boundary suggests a link through to Story Road. Certainly the current footway and bridge over and adjacent to Westhampnett road and the river are not fit for purpose so a continued link along Story Road to a new “oblique bridge close to the Westhampnett Road crossing seems an obvious and overdue move. A new bridge in this location will act as a signifier of the river and mark a way point on the river.

The rivers course is currently hidden behind an inappropriately located hedge this should be removed and the footway widened into the river corridor to permit safe and efficient use of the footway as well as visual access to the Lavant.

Some neighbouring properties appear to be occupying and tending the banks, ownership should be established and asserted in these locations.



3 Bridge Road/Riverside Link

West of Spitalfield Lane roundabout a new bridge should be placed to take the pedestrian route over the river onto Bridge Road to provide a safer link paralleling the river and St Pancras.

The link from Bridge Road to Riverside can be significantly improved in terms of path width and vegetation management, the missing section of paving can be installed to Tozers Way

Once this critical link is made the pedestrian route can then be run along the north or south bank of the river to Tozers Way

Along St Pancras the current low concrete rail could be reinforced or replaced to improve the character of the riverside, this could be augmented with further bridges to express the rivers location.



4 Tozer/St Agnes Link

The link along the river from Tozer to St Agnes is mostly paved but appears to be over private land. With the agreement of landowners this should be an easy link to establish the only barrier is a timber fence and some planting. The bankside vegetation could be managed more aggressively to permit views through.



5 Cattle Market Car Park Swale

The Cattle Market Car park is a large paved open space accounting for a good deal of run off but with no visible link to culverted Lavant. The close location of the Lavant could be combined with a revised drainage strategy for the car park to create a visually strong evocation of the river by creating a large vegetated bio-swale on the western perimeter of the car park. The outflow of this feature would be scrubbed of hydro-carbons by phytoremediation and fed into the Lavant culvert to augment the rivers flow.

This is both a practical solution, an ecological beneficial solution and a feature that would make a robust statement about Chichester's commitment to the best of ecological design and place making.



6 South Bastions vegetation management, bank relaxing and water re-circulation

The area of the south bastions suffers from a lack of vegetation management which blocks views and presents a scruffy character. In addition the generosity of open space on either bank w=makes this an obvious candidate for bank relaxation and ecological improvement. In this high traffic, open location the river itself is a candidate for the creation of a permanent standing water body. Augmenting and recirculating water in the dry months with the utilization of low weirs in the river bed will allow the retention of permanent aquatic habitats and a visual and ecological resource for the city and it's visitors.

Ambitious vegetation management could see some trees removed to improve daylighting of the course and views to the walls. The areas in the vicinity of the river course could be the subject of a more subtle grass maintenance regime allowing a wild flower meadow corridor to be developed along the river course.



7 Chichester College vegetation management, bank relaxation.

Bank relaxation combined with ambitious vegetation management could see some trees and shrubs removed to improve daylighting of the course and views to the walls. The areas in the vicinity of the river course could be the subject of a more subtle grass maintenance regime allowing a wildflower meadow corridor to be developed along the river course.

