Large Woody Material Surveys on River Cam for North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council

Debris accumulation at Sandbrook Lane Bridge

March 2026

Introduction

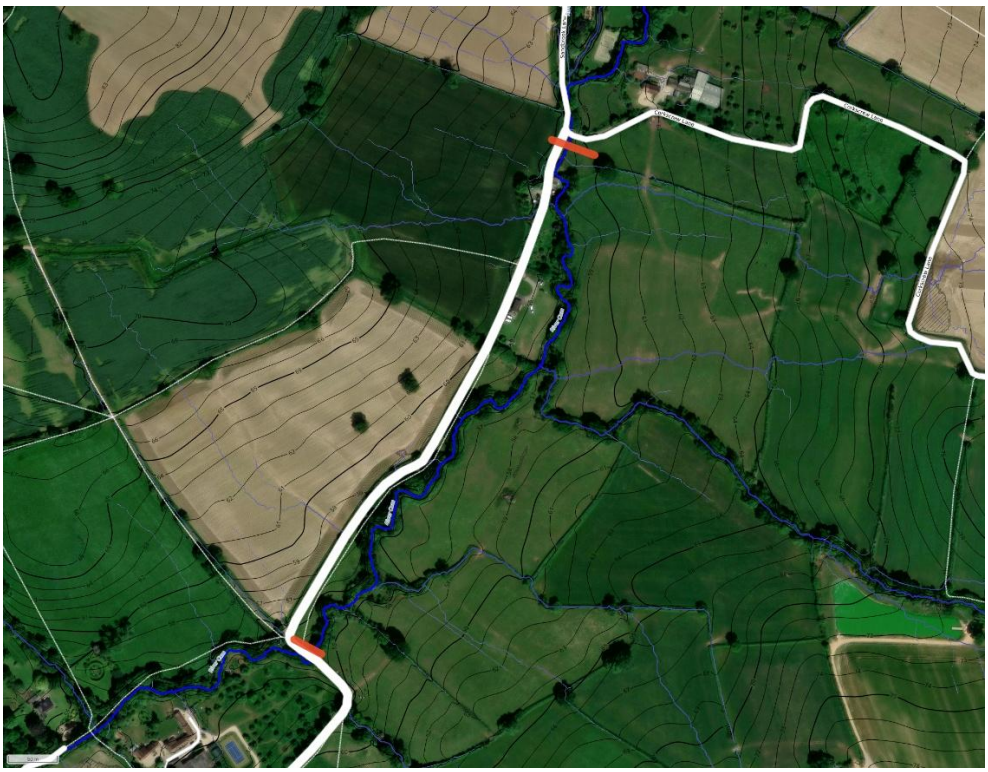
Following the major flood event in May 2023, significant large woody material was conveyed through the River Cam. Major log jams were formed where constrictions were present, e.g. bridges/culverts, bankside tree stems and restricted channel morphology. Additionally, smaller, though still potentially significant debris accumulations, arose as the flooding subsided.

Community stakeholders, including the Cam Catchment Resilience Project (CCRP) and Yeovil Rivers Community Trust (YRCT), were aware of the potential for such accumulations to impede flows and possibly to increase the likelihood of flooding at vulnerable points. In order to quantify this risk, North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council commissioned LT Ecological Services to undertake surveys in certain reaches of the River Cam between Pound Lane (Yarlington) and Ridgeway Lane (Brookhampton). The surveys identified the locations of major logjams as well as more significant accumulations of smaller woody material/debris. This brief report summarises the findings of these surveys and provides advice on the most appropriate management actions to be taken.

Reaches Surveyed

Three reaches were surveyed. Yarlington (Pound Lane) to Yarlington Mill is shown in Map 1. Sandbrook Lane from Corkscrew Lane to Sandbrook Lane bridge is shown in Map2 and Brookhampton, west of Carey Road to Ridgeway Lane is shown in Map 3.

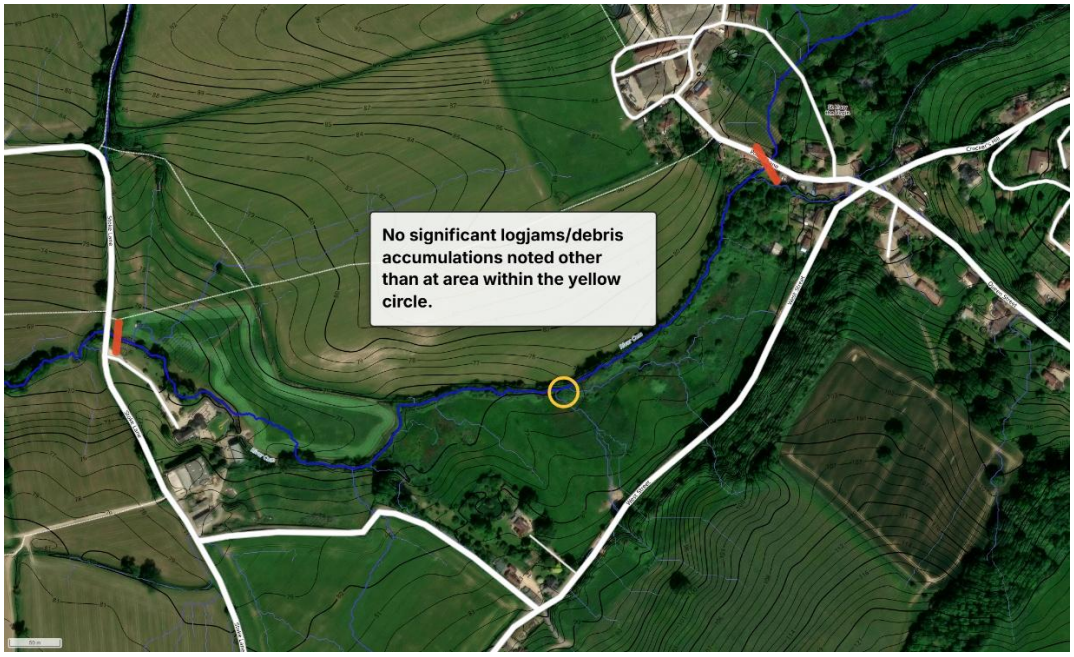
Map 1 Yarlington Reach



Map 2 Sandbrook Lane Reach

Map 3 Brookhampton Reach

The locations of logjams and debris accumulations in the respective reaches are identified in the maps below.



Map 4 Yarlington Reach LWM locations

Map 5 Sandbrook Lane Reach LWM locations

Map 6 Brookhampton Reach LWM locations

Details of the large woody material found at each location and the recommended actions are summarised in Table 1 below.

LWM Reference	LWM Feature	Actions
SL01	Significant bramble accumulation in-channel which could trap debris and cause backing up	Remove bramble within the channel perimeter
SL02	Accumulation of smaller woody material	Remove entirely from channel
SL03	Major large woody material in-channel	LWM not in a vulnerable flooding location. Partially remove and/or realign to manage risk appropriately
SL04	Accumulation of smaller woody material	Remove entirely from channel
SL05	Accumulation of smaller woody material	LWM not in a vulnerable flooding location. Partially remove and/or realign to manage risk appropriately

SL06	Major large woody material in-channel	Carefully manage to enhance logjam as this is currently protecting a small bridge. No removal required
SL07	Major large woody material in-channel	Carefully manage to enhance logjam as this is currently protecting a significant area of bank erosion and reducing impacts on the Sandbrook Lane Bridge downstream. No removal required
SL08	Woody material and other debris partially blocking one span of the Sandbrook Lane Bridge	Remove all woody material blocking the span
BH01	Major large woody material in-channel	LWM not in a vulnerable flooding location. Partially remove and/or realign to manage any risk appropriately
BH02	Major large woody material in-channel	LWM not in a vulnerable flooding location. Partially remove and/or realign to manage any risk appropriately
BH03	Accumulation of smaller woody material	Remove entirely from channel
BH04	Major large woody material in-channel	LWM not in a vulnerable flooding location. Partially remove and/or realign to manage any risk appropriately
BH05	Major large woody material in-channel	LWM in good location to provide flood attenuation benefits. Targeted removal of problematic material if needed
BH06	Major large woody material in-channel	LWM in good location to provide flood attenuation benefits to bridge downstream. Enhance to improve stability and performance
BH07	Major large woody material in-channel	LWM in good location to provide flood attenuation benefits to bridge

		downstream. Enhance to improve stability and performance

A selection of representative photos of some of the above features is provided in the Photo Library Section below.

General Reach Observations

The Sandbrook Lane reach between Corkscrew Lane and SL01, had very few LWM accumulations requiring management. These were assessed as natural accumulations which are highly beneficial for stream ecology. It was noted that some limited bankside vegetation management, (mainly coppicing), would be helpful to reduce shading and reduce the potential for snagging on stems protruding into the channel perimeter. Vegetation in a state of decay and/or collapse would be sensible to target for this management to reduce woody inputs to the channel.

A similar approach to vegetation management would be beneficial for the Yarlington Reach where coppicing on a 5 – 10 year rotation of approximately 20% of appropriate stools would enhance the stream ecology and hydrology.

Photo Library

SL06 Major Woody Material

SL05 Minor Woody Material

BH04 Major Woody Material

BH05 Major Woody Material

BH03 Minor Woody Material

Conclusion

Few major woody material issues were encountered in the Sandbrook Lane Reach and those that were could be easily managed.

The six major woody accumulations on the Brookhampton Reach would require careful management to ensure the balance between conveyance of flows and attenuation of flows was achieved in order to protect property and infrastructure.

A SRA CFAF application to help cover the costs of interventions is considered to be appropriate and the CCRP/YRCT intends to apply in the first tranche in the 2026/27 financial

year. We gratefully acknowledge the £500.00 match funding the PC has allocated towards this project.

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