Woodlands and Water

Woodlands and Water response to the developers Environment Survey records, masterplans, designs, and SANGS as a result of the re-consultation.

The community continues to express strong opposition to the original and altered proposals and requests that the following be considered following the re-consultation. We appreciate time is short before the inquiry is due to start and were only recently made aware that a re-consultation had occurred for consideration.

The local community also pays attention to these same Downlands Farm surroundings, such as the ancient woodland, meadows, natural environment, and how the water flows through the woodlands during the winter.

As a result, images of the water in the winter woodland habitats in 2022 were taken as a means to demonstrate that the habitats tell a different tale than the updated spreadsheets. The new paperwork has not addressed the water habitats and the SANGS updates has not addressed these issues, or that of the proposed SuDS modifying ancient woodland watercourses – which in itself introduces direct change to the hydrology of ancient woodland and irreversible harm.

The re-consultation appears to offer no updates to the continued harm of the water which had been advised by many residents. The water needed by Lake Wood and the ancient and old woodlands.

Across the area, during winter and rain the ditches and boggy bits all change and fill up as well. These have not been pictured but please be aware near the proposed new boardwalk in Budletts are copious boggy and ditch areas needing water as part of their habitat. These can be seen during winter and not so obvious when it is dry. The SANGS engineering of the field will impact these boggy and ditch areas as well.

The following provides picture evidence for the re-consultation and the proposed SANGS with SuDS and more engineering will impact many of the woodland natural flows of water and therefore introduce direct and indirect harm. It is astonishing how all of the ancient woodlands will be harmed with this proposal and re-consultation; it just keeps getting worse with every piece of information the developers submit.

Water to all the woodlands and ancient woodland areas, including plantation and long-established woodland and the priority habitats will be impacted by the re-consultation which did not reflect on any information provided by others.

The following images are mostly screenshots from videos, apologies some are out of focus due to this. We hope the inspector is minded to consider the images of the water in the woodlands.

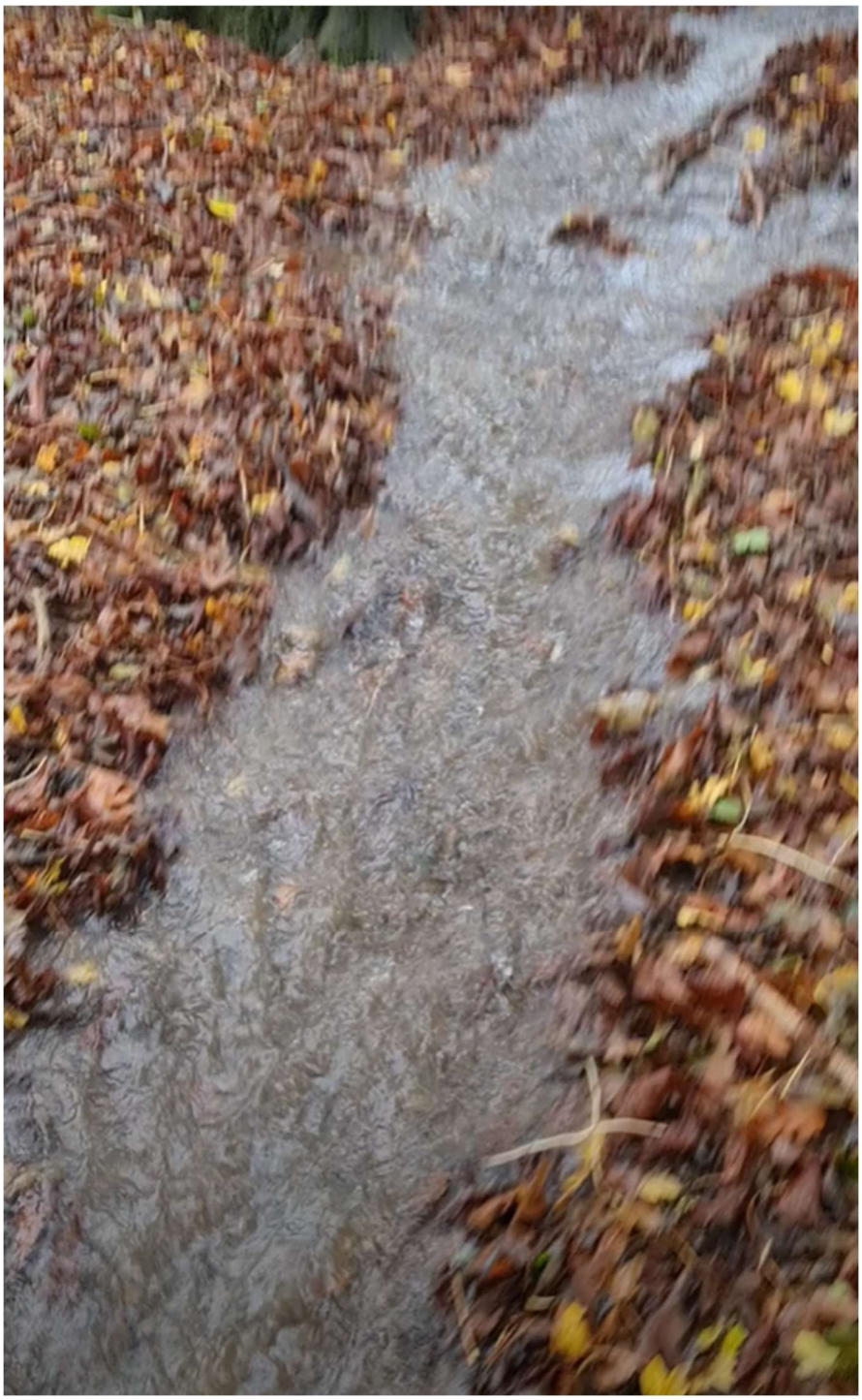
Re-consultation- Woodland and Water

1. The following images of the water in the woodlands and ghylls after the re-consultation has not addressed these impact to the woodlands, images seem the only way to provide evidence.

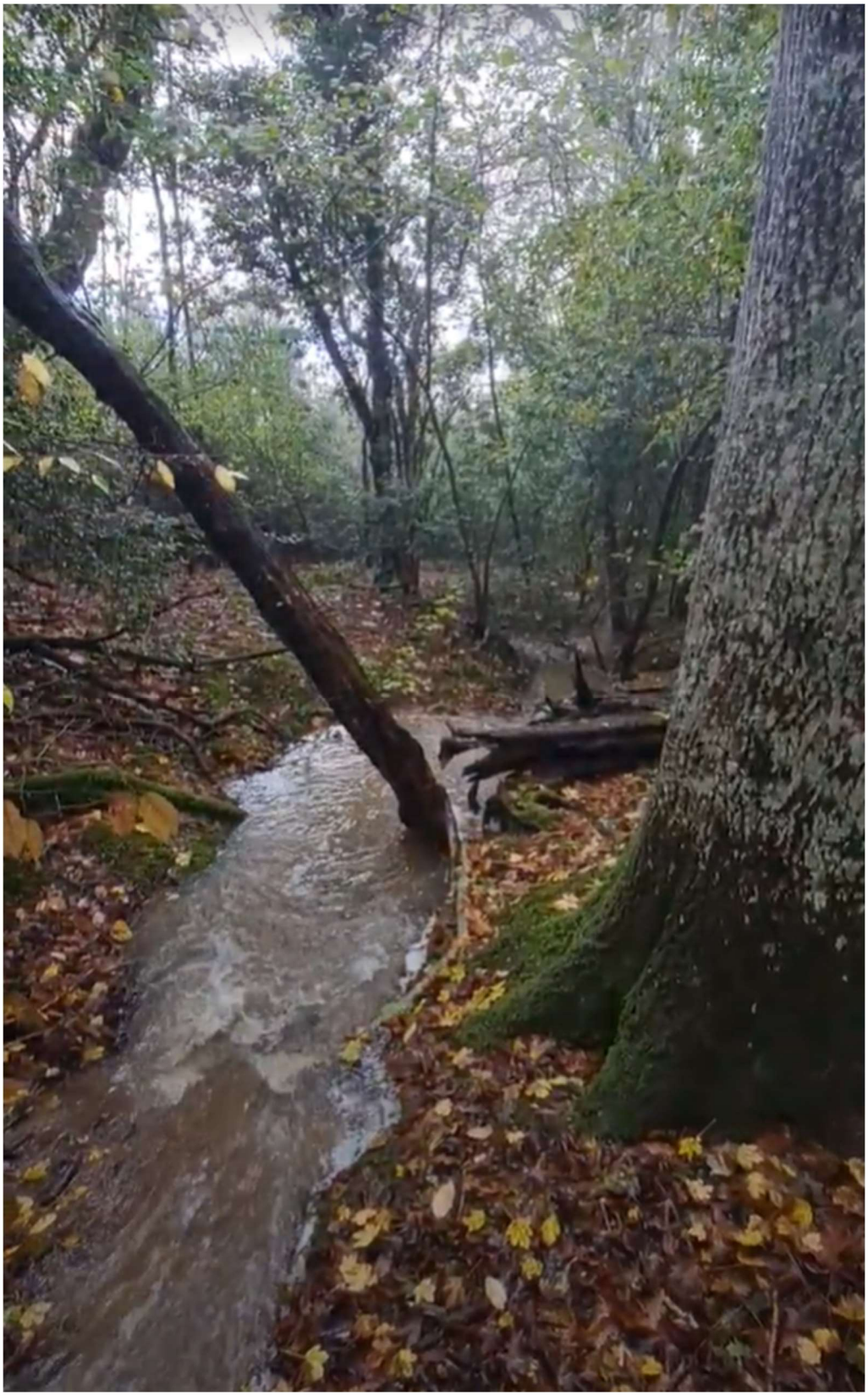
Thirty Acre Wood

water at W8 access and roundabout area

2. Water flows off the Downland grass meadows through to the ancient woodland Thirty Acre Wood



3. Water flows off the fields to Thirty Acre Wood, winter 2022, W8 location of the proposed new road. This is part of the surface water to WFD Shortbridge Stream which should remain free of surface or groundwater pollution and contamination.

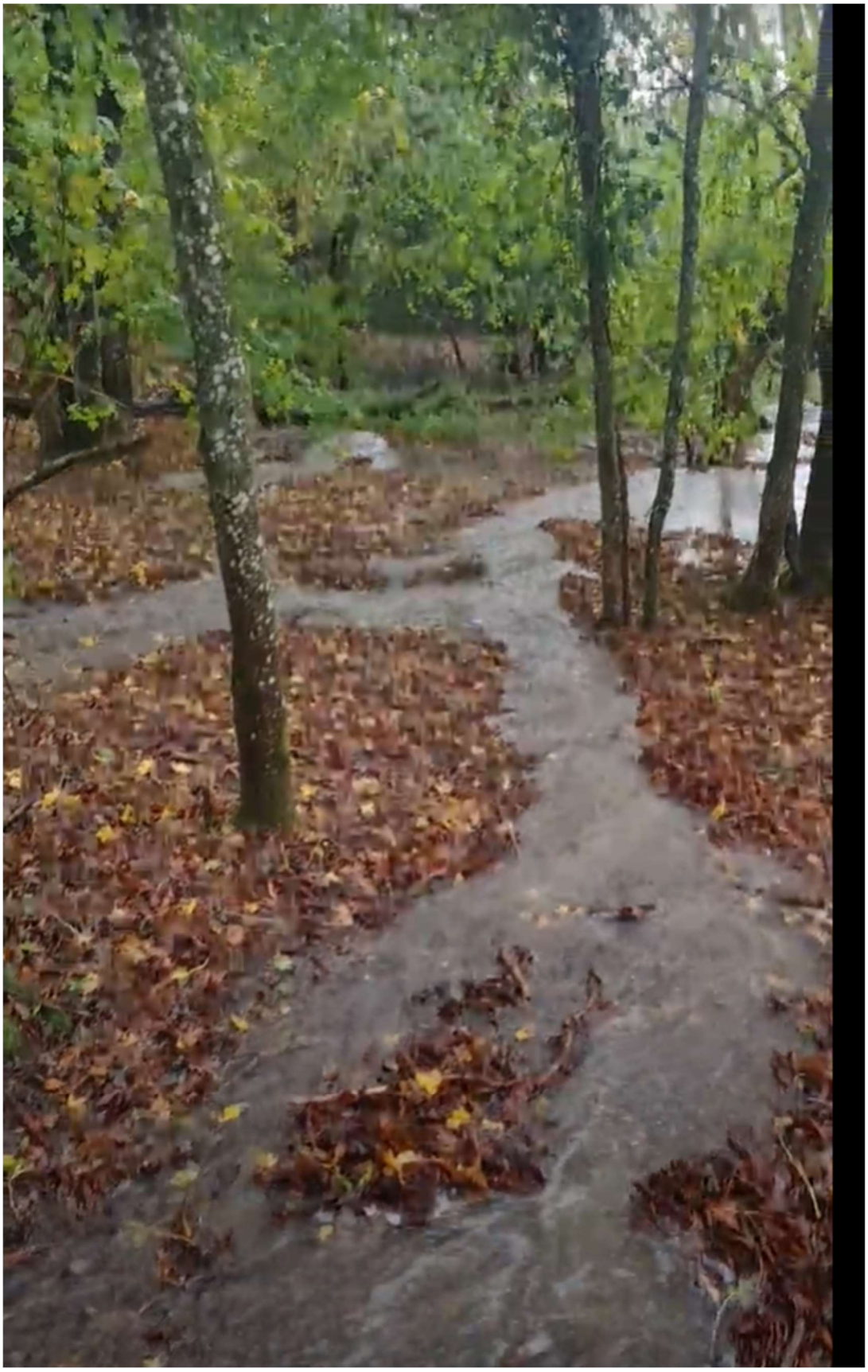


4. Thirty Acre Wood -wet woodland stream winter 2022 – water flows off the fields to W8, adjacent to the plantation woodland next to Lake Wood. Wet woodlands with carpets of ancient woodland ground flora of irreplaceable habitat and also are a noted priority habitats and deciduous woodland.

5. This flows to Shortbridge Stream via a culvert. This stream is next to the plantation and is proposed to be engineered away from its natural flow and course. The ditch between the plantation and woodlands is the location of this image.



6. Thirty Acre Wood 2022 – Ancient wet Woodland and priority habitat – water flows off fields. W8 road and roundabout access section. Wet ancient woodland proposed for access road and roundabout. This image is next to the dip in the field topography and water pours through the woodlands, at the proposed road access location, this water flows through the woodlands to Shortbridge Stream in winter.



7. Thiry Acre Wood – this is now mapped as deciduous woodland and priority habitat and are long-established woodlands. Image of the type of streams during winter 2022, transect W8 next to the Plantation Woodland. Prior to 2019 and the current ecologists this area was mapped as ancient woodland. It seems disingenuous within the planning application to state that no ancient woodland will be lost when it used to be mapped as ancient woodland prior to the planning application. Ref. ancient woodland ground flora please see the pictures of the abundant AW woodland species and habitats for a comparison of this area during spring 2023.



8. Tree with surveyors orange dot, ancient woodland ground flora evident and more wet woodland to the side of this tree. Winter 2022. During rain in W8 the water flows all over the place. This is natural and the re-consultation still contends to manufacture the water courses across all the ancient woodlands.

9. W8,– proposed access and roundabout using ancient woodland , AW ground flora in the image

Longwood Gill

10. The following pictures are from around the Longwood Gill area.

11. carriage drive Spring in bank of sunken track



12. Longwood Gill sunken track, during rain springs in the area start to bubble up from all over the site , this one is in bank of sunken track, carriage drive near the plantation woodland and ancient woodland Thirty Acre Wood side of the carriage drive



13. Longwood Gill at the carriage drive section where the ghyll stream crosses the carriage drive, the water rises rapidly and fast during rainfall – this gets deeper and rises above the carriage drive at times of peak rainfall. The ghyll flows rapidly to Thirty Acre Wood and ghyll irreplaceable habitat is offered within the SANG. This is very deep and within the SANG near the proposed car park. This is deep and unsafe water after rainfall and runs like this on dry days as well as during rain. Surface water flows off the fields to this location. Longwood Gill and its ghyll stream continues to Thirty Acre Wood and is not just within one part of the landscape suggested by appellants scheme. This flows via culvert under the A22 to WFD Shortbridge Stream.



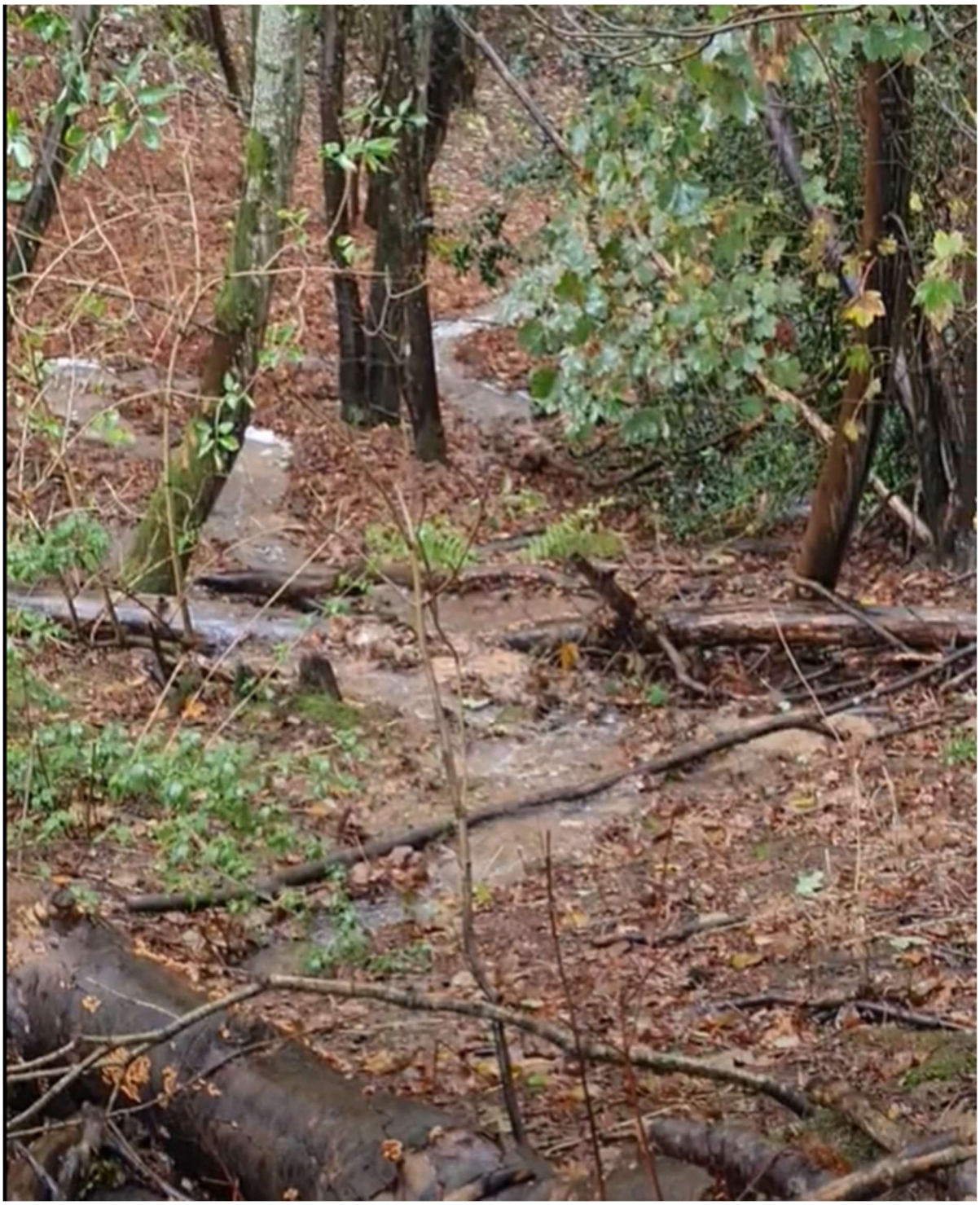
14. Longwood Gill –the ghyll stream flows to Shortbridge Stream and the irreplaceable ghyll habitat continues through Thirty Acre Wood. In spring this area is covered in carpets of Sussex wood anemone and ancient ground flora put within a SANG and open to recreation from both the new estate and two car parks and visitor's with dogs etc. The re-consultation still has part of the ghyll habitat in the SANGS.



15. Water flows off the fields from both sides of the ghyll and SuDs and Sewage Treatment plant proposed to change the hydrology of ancient woodland ghyll habitats and to the carriage drive and Longwood Gill, winter 2022. It is unclear from the re-consultation if the sewage treatment is in the SANGS area next to Longwood Gill ? there were so many developer maps it was unclear where the sewage pumping was still proposed in a delicate water environment and if within the SANGS and buffers, the water from the fields to Longwood Gill is of great concern as it flows to the ghyll streams



16. Water flow off the field – the water is flowing through the location of the sewage treatment and continues downhill to Longwood Gill and across the carriage drive. Water also flows down the carriage drive in the sunken track.



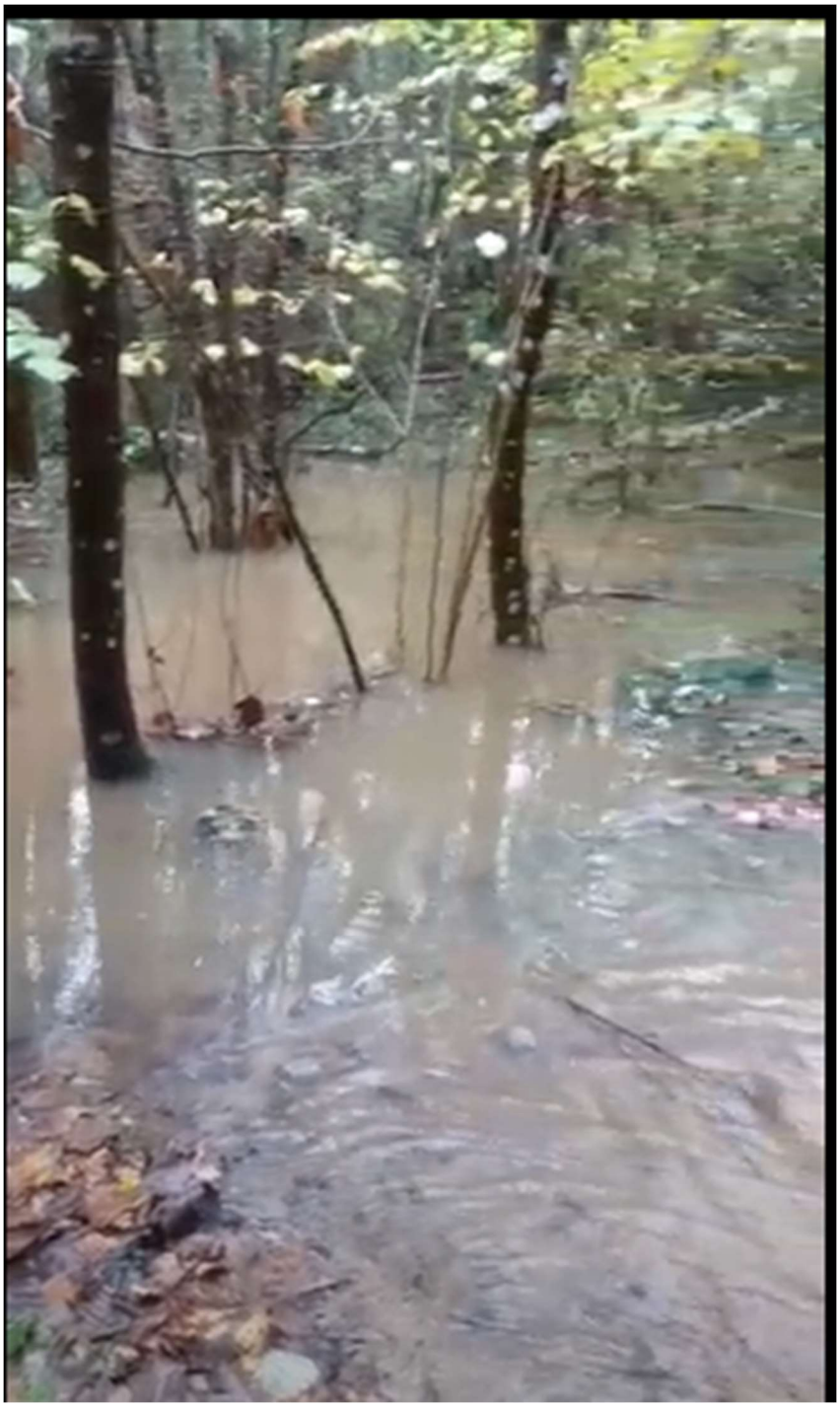
17. Water everywhere in Longwood Gill during rain



18. Longwood Gill water, winter 2022,



19. Longwood Gill, top of the ghyll near the fields , water gushes over the sides of the fields and through the landscape and through the rocks in the ghyll

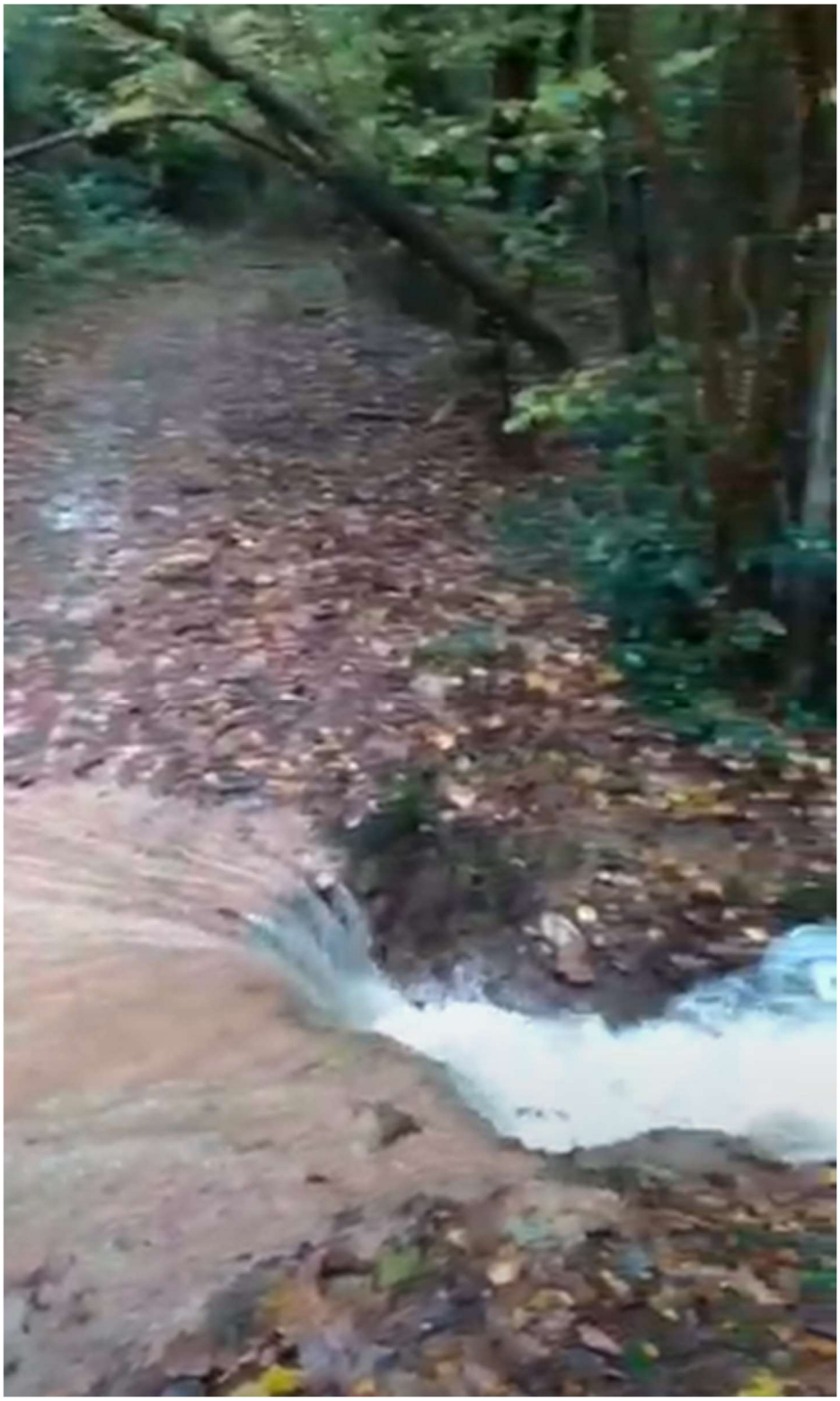


20. Example of water in Shermanreed ghyll at the carriage drive looking upstream of the ghyll stream– streams and surface water run through Shermanreed Ghyll creating pond habitats, ditches and boggy bits and then flows over the carriage drive.

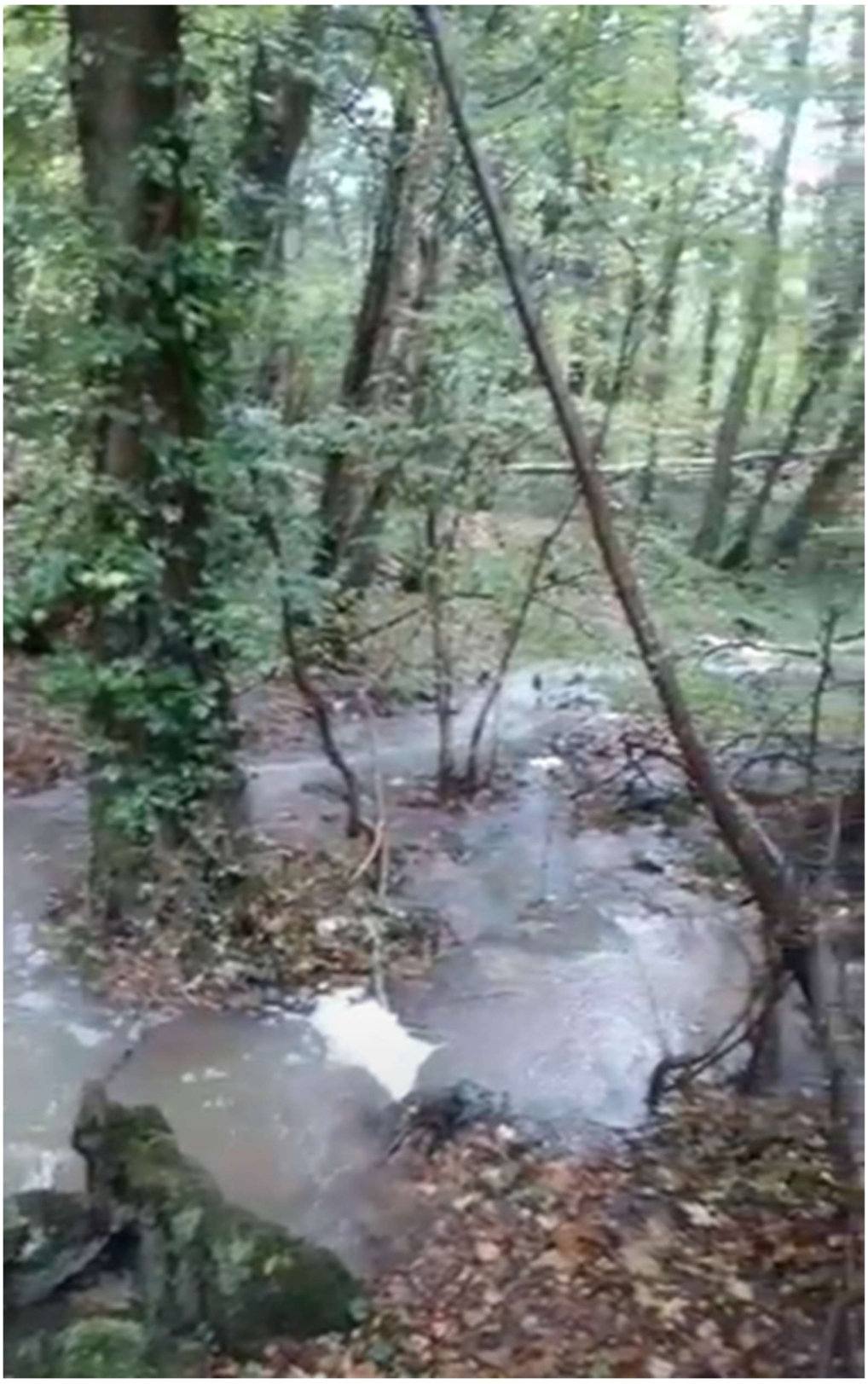
21. The SANGS re-consultation has advised to drill spikes into the ground, to add a board walk which is currently not needed. This will cause harm to the land and watercourse during the winter season and introduces a volume of SANGS use such as dogs swimming. Or cycling off-roading during the dry season the ground flora is carpets of AW and fungi including Sussex Rare Devil's Fingers. Volumes of walkers and the potential of dogs with flea and tick treatments swimming in the natural ponds habitats and standing water will introduce chemicals adverse impact to the woodland species.

Shermanreed Ghyll - example velocity of a ghyll stream during winter

22. The proposed board walk impacts the carriage drive in Shermanreed Ghyll and its watercourses being damaged, along with the Spring AW ground flora being covered



23. Shermanreed Ghyll water rises rapidly and flows across the carriage drive during rain (winter 2022). This creates additional danger due to depth and velocity of the water proposed, within the SANG. This is water flowing across the carriage drive in Shermanreed Ghyll, lack of conservation has washed parts of the carriage drive away. A plunge pool is to the side of the carriage drive and downstream pond.



24. Shermanreed ghyll example of another part of the stream and woodland placed in the SANGS. Water runs off the fields through Shermanreed woods. Engineering footpaths and engineering Proposed SuDs affects this water ecosystem and potentially directional drilling to this irreplaceable habitat – is this the location suggested? It is irreplaceable for a reason. Looking downstream of Shermanreed Ghyll placed in the SANGS habitats open to recreational pressure, off road cycling, dogs swimming in previously quiet habitats barely known.



Shermanreed Ghyll stream, and pond 2022



25. Shermanreed Ghyll stream, pond (2021) one large tree has since fallen – see above, allowing light to filter through. The SANGS is proposing to move coppice stools to add a board-walk. Shermanreed has many heritage records including 1585, a copy of which is included in the woodlands heritage response to the re-consultation. Shermanreed is old – it is irreplaceable and why are they suggesting such drastic changes to an irreplaceable environment



26. Shermanreed Ghyll, one of the interesting pond habitats which seasonally appear in the woodlands . During the drought most of the ghylls and ponds dried up, Lake Wood and Budletts habitats remained with water but it was hard to see the ancient woodlands so dry in the drought. The re-consultation of the SANGS and impacts to the water feeding the pond landscape has not been assessed that we could find.

Shermanreed Ghyll - streams form from the small hole dug in the SANGS field



27. Engineering the so-called paths and route within meadow grasses for the SANG re-consultation affects the surface water of Shermanreed Ghyll. The water flows spread out from the field in winter, through Shermanreed Ancient Woodland. This stream arrived because of a new hole in the field, it seems to originate as a spring from the hole, is this likely therefore the water is so close to the surface it is an aquifer spring which started after a bore hole was dug in the proposed SANG field. This raises huge concerns as this was only a small hole and the field is in the middle of three ancient woodlands. Concerned the engineering of the proposed SANG and engineering the layout of a natural habitat may affect the underground aquifer and the water flows though the three AW.



28. Water flow from the meadow into AW and site of proposed SANGs fields across Shermanreed Ghyll.





1. Grey Wagtail, Shermanreed Ghyll

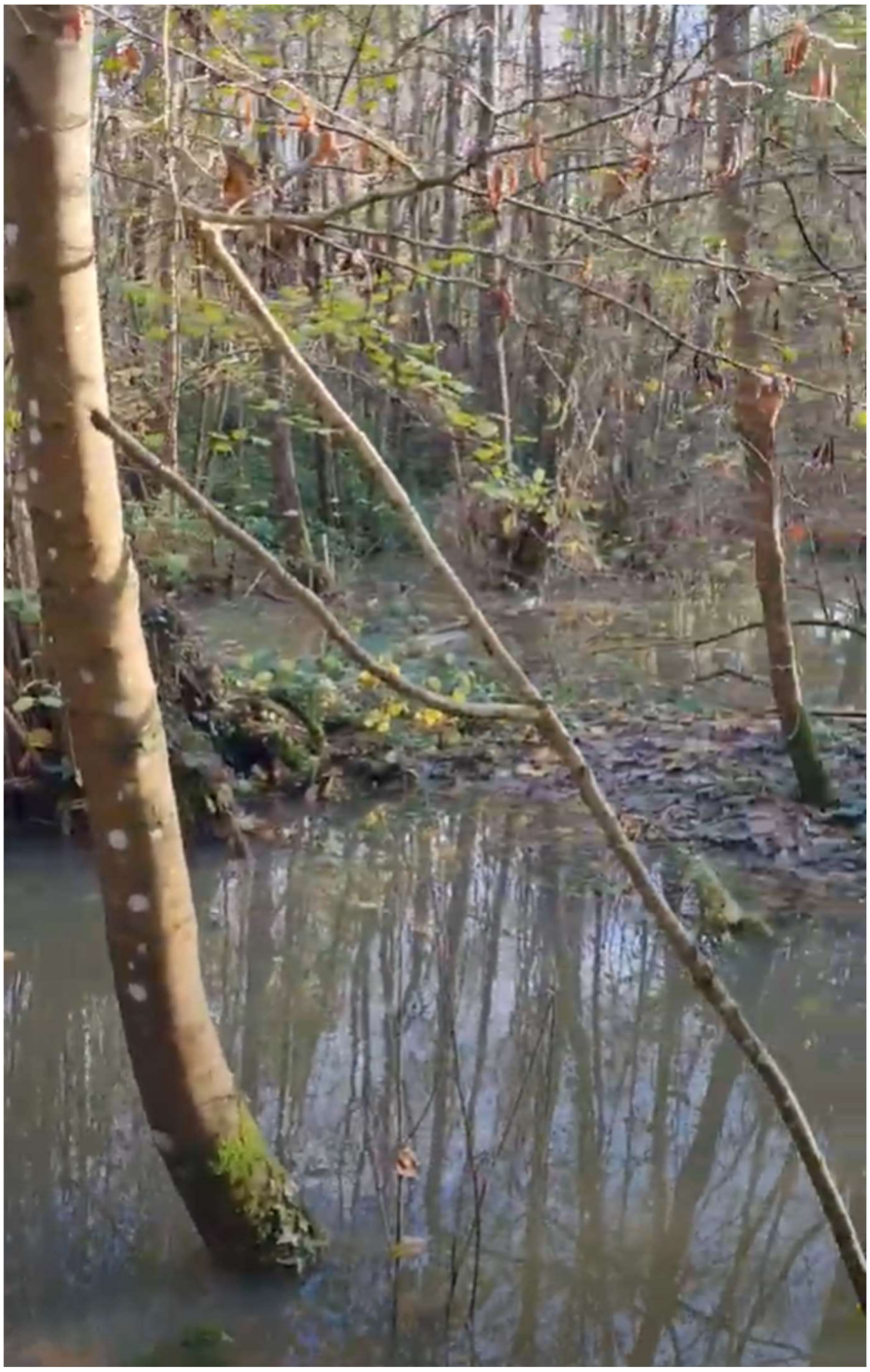
Shermanreed Ghyll – example of woodland water habitats

29. Carriage drive looking upstream, then downstream (winter 2022), the new pathway is unclear which parts of these irreplaceable wet watercourses are impacted



30. Shermanreed ghyll, carriage drive streams towards bypass, winter 2022 impacted by the proposed boardwalk

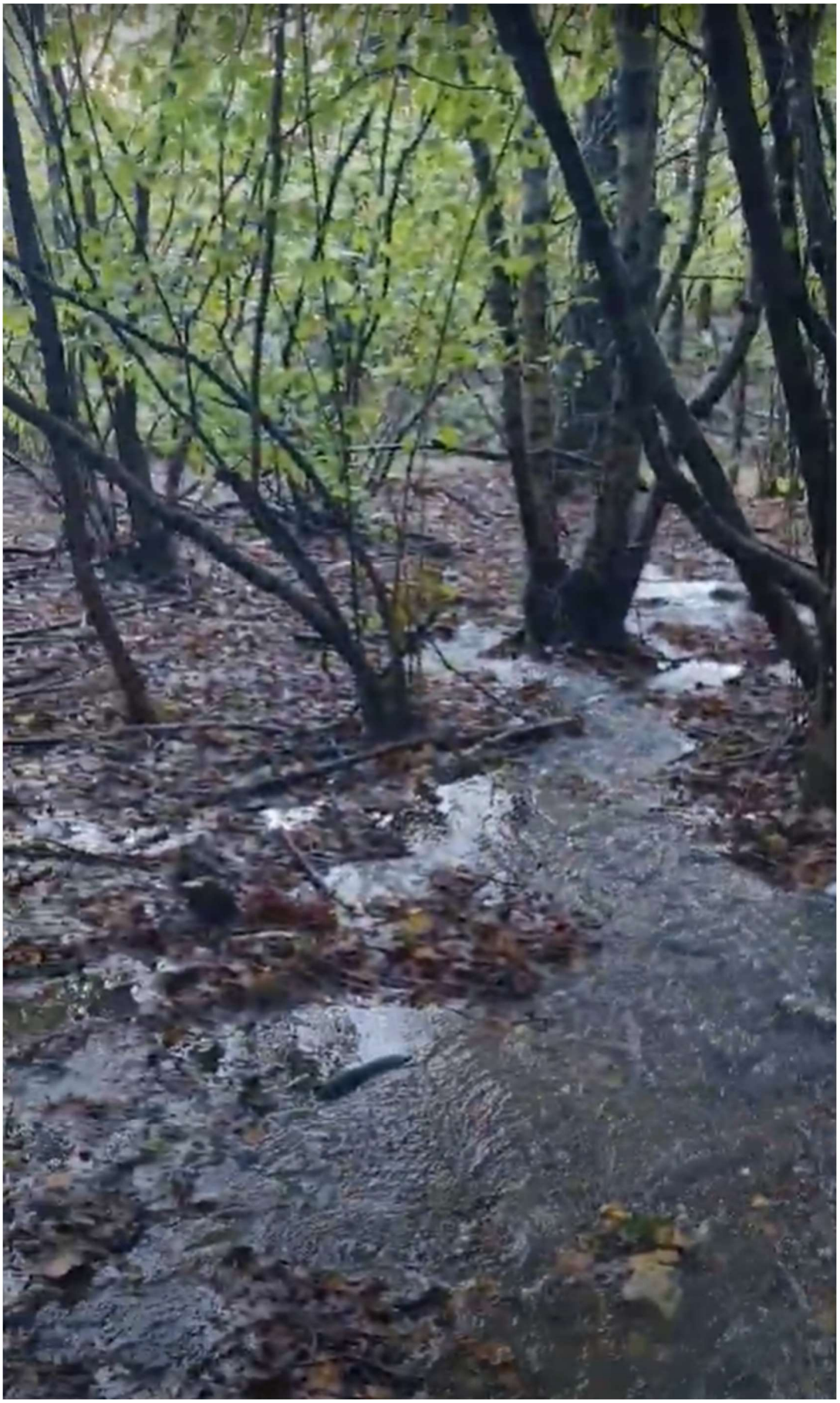
31. The Downlands landscape is best witnessed after the land ‘recharges’ after summer and into winter, then the ghylls roar into life and the naturally balanced ecosystem is seen once the ghylls are operating and moving water across the landscape – a naturally fluctuating ecosystem reliant on the water from three hay fields. The irrevocable harm removing meadows of grasses filtering the watercourses which then flow across ancient wet woodland’s will be profound.



32. Shermanreed Ghyll, water 2022



33. Shermanreed Ghyll, carriage drive, November 2022

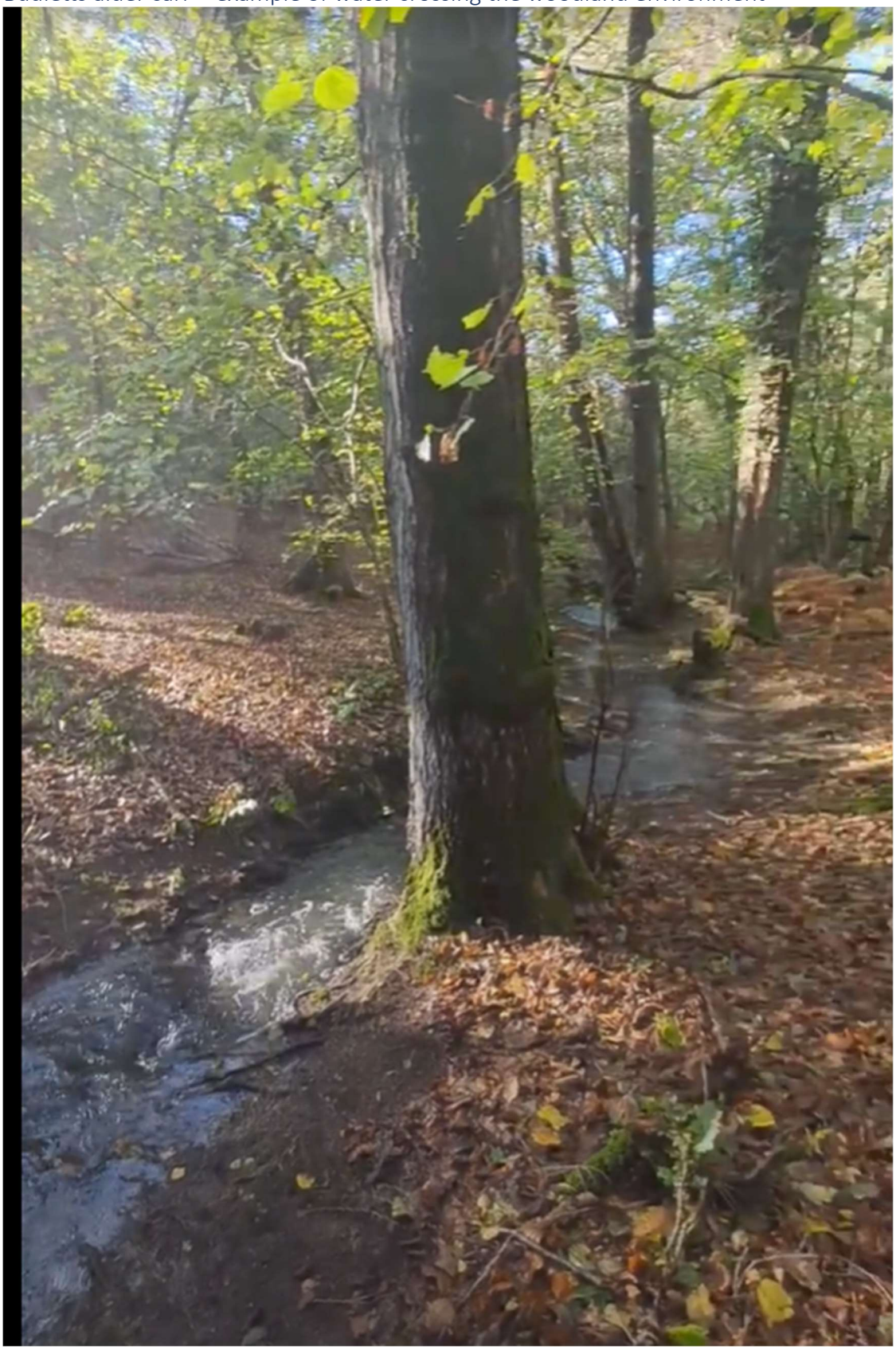


34. Downlands Farm - Woodland water from fields, winter 2022

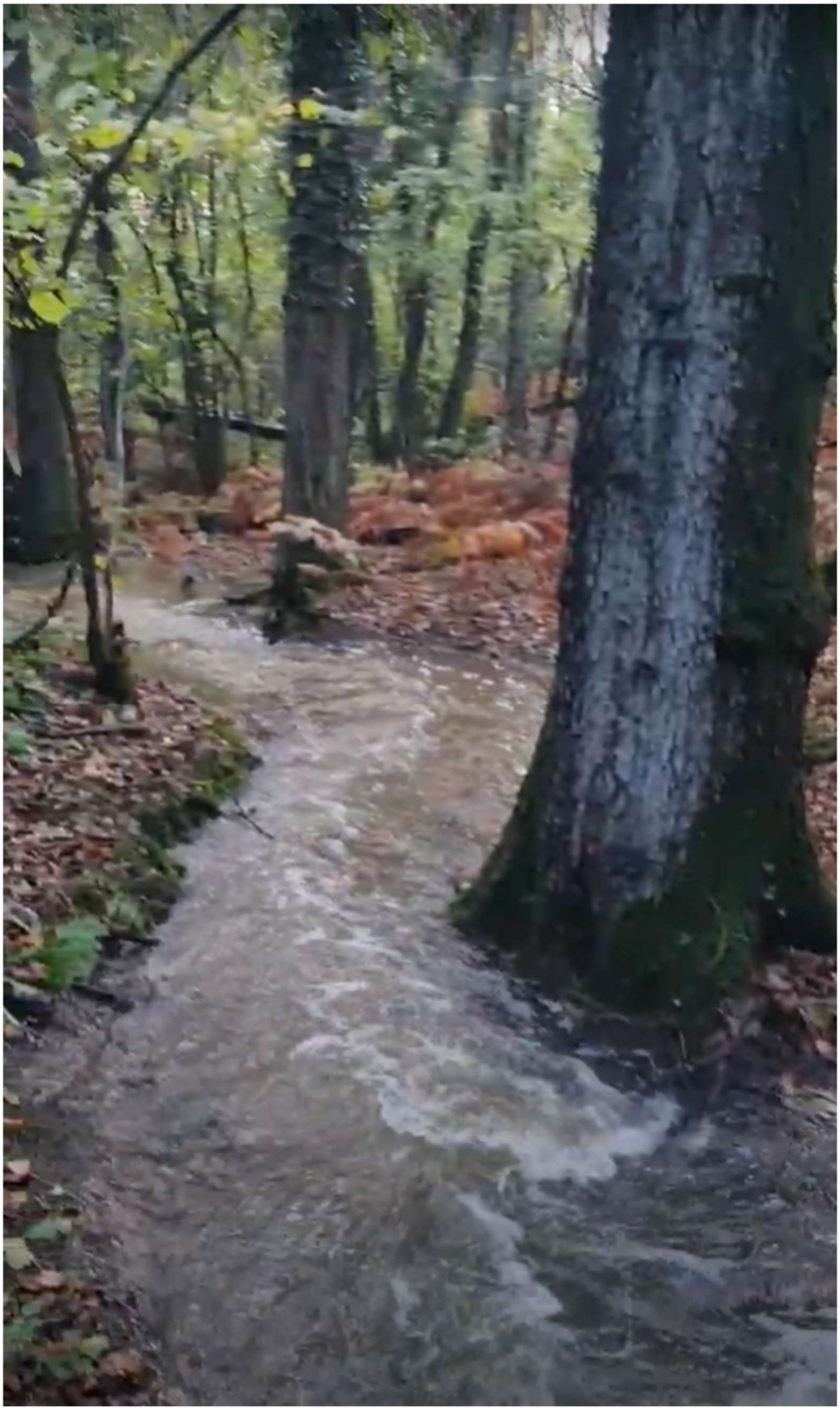


35. Shermanreed Ghyll water, carriage drive looking upstream of the ghyll stream, winter 2022

Budletts alder carr – example of water crossing the woodland environment

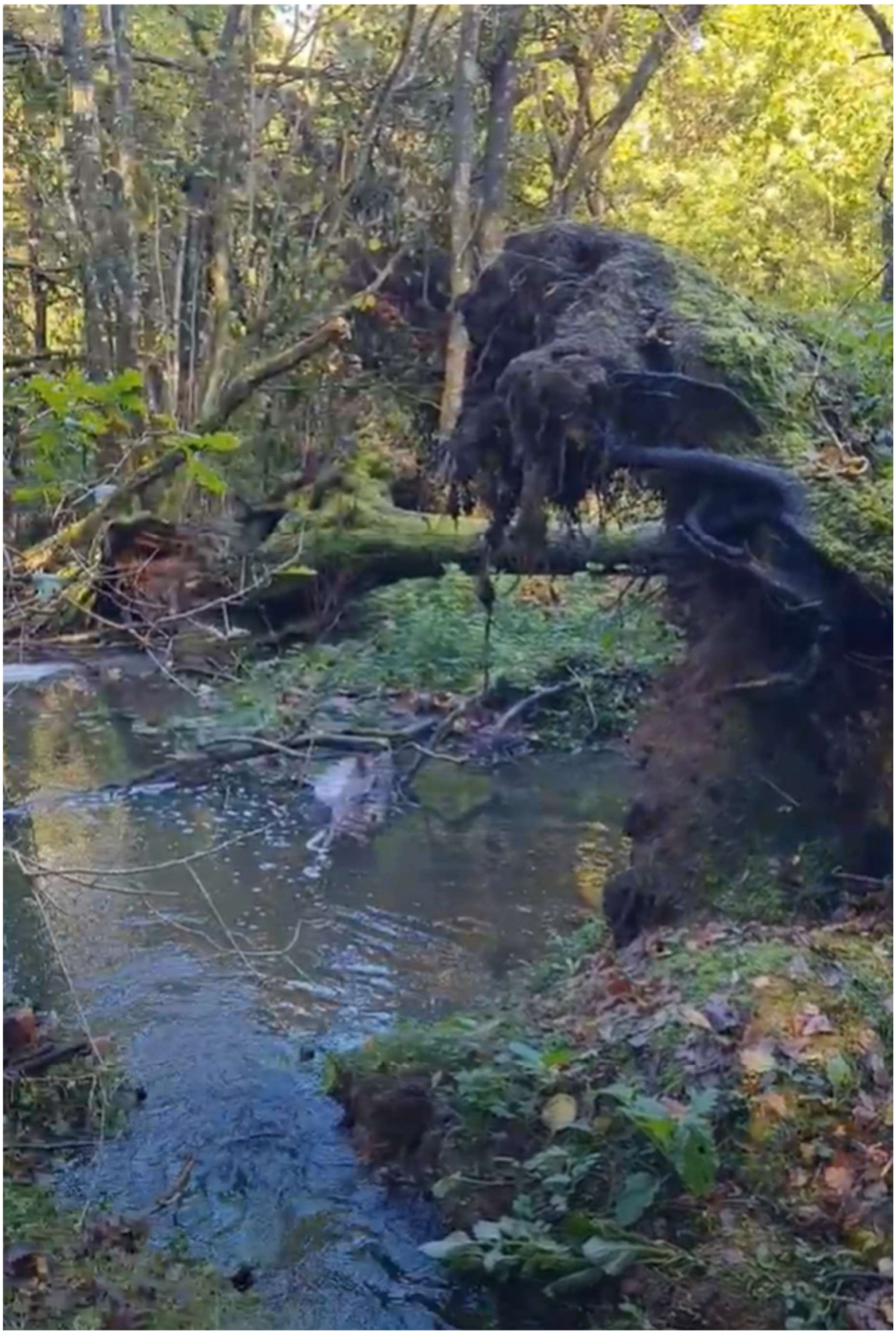


36. Budletts Wood, alder carr, winter 2022, it is unclear what and how the re-consultation impacts the openness of Budletts Wood, this stream is a rare alder carr habitat within Budletts Wood and adjacent to the SANG

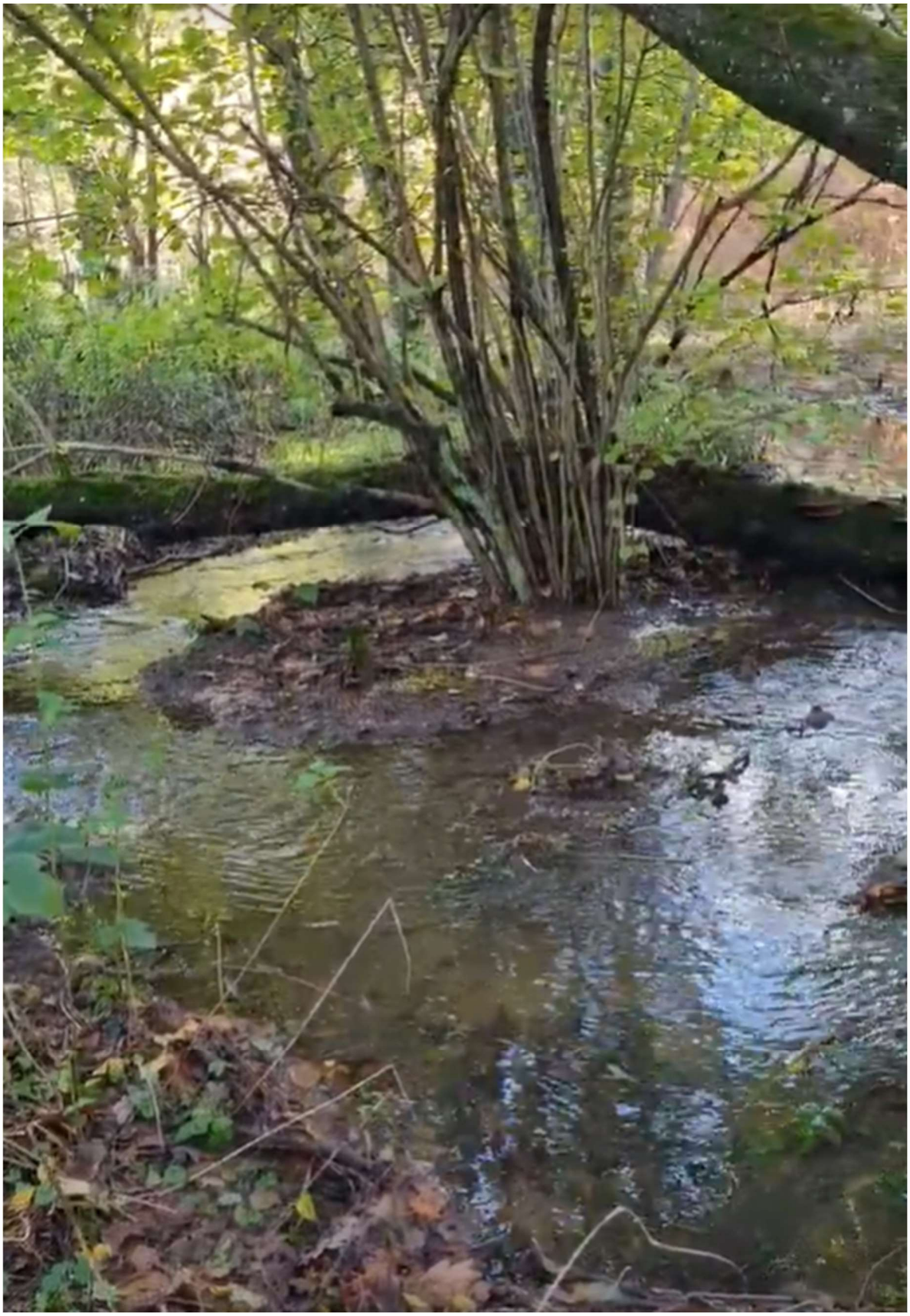


37. Example of woodland water in Budletts Wood, alder carr, winter 2022. This provides an insight to the types of flow and velocity of woodland water, which rapidly occurs once the land is recharged after summer. Fragmenting these natural watercourses can only be devastating in a very natural environment. This is used to demonstrate the water in the woodlands and flows to parts of the proposed SANG. It is unclear how harm, loss and deterioration is to be avoided in any part of Budletts Wood in the blue line boundary.

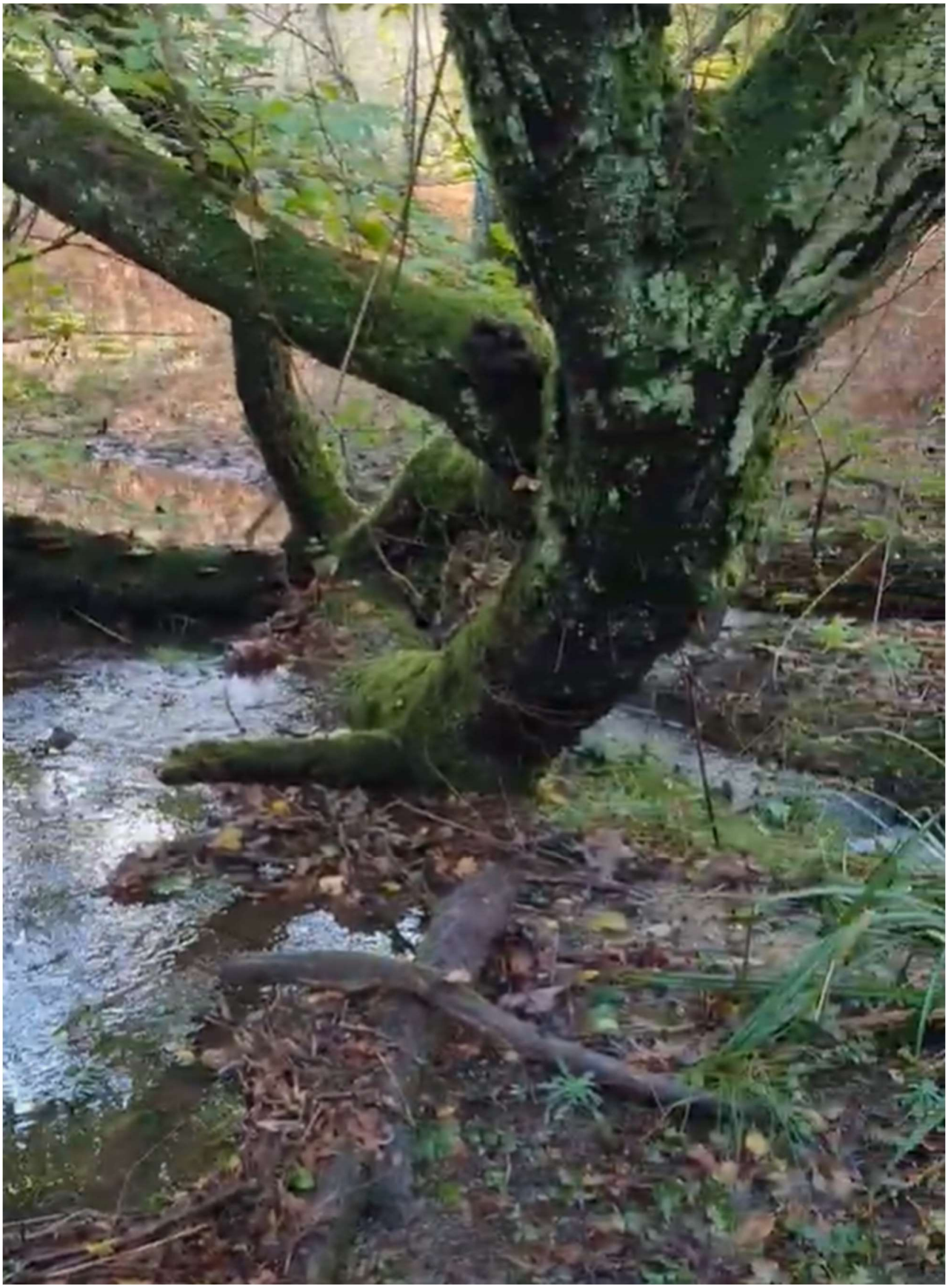
38. The Budletts Wood alder carr is indicative of how the water across the ancient wet woodlands flows across the area during rainfall impacted by the Downlands proposals to ancient woodlands.



39. Budletts Wood, indicative of standing water which occurs across the woodlands in ditches and boggy bits across the area impacted by the water from Downlands farm.

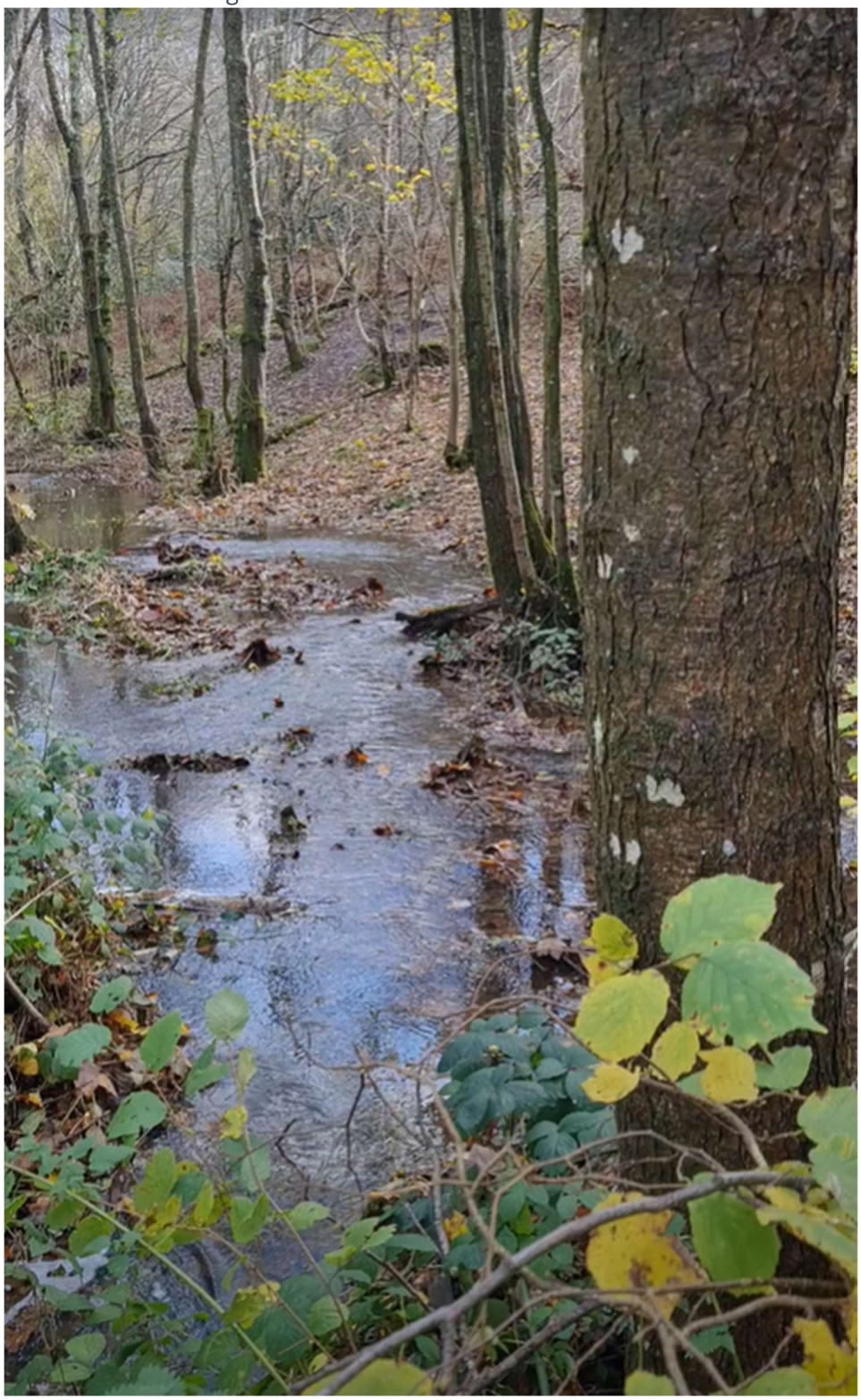


40. Budletts Wood, 2022 this habitat is adjacent to the proposed SANG, we can find no impact assessment to another part of the ancient woodland assessment of irreplaceable connected habitats. This will be impacted by increased visitors demands.



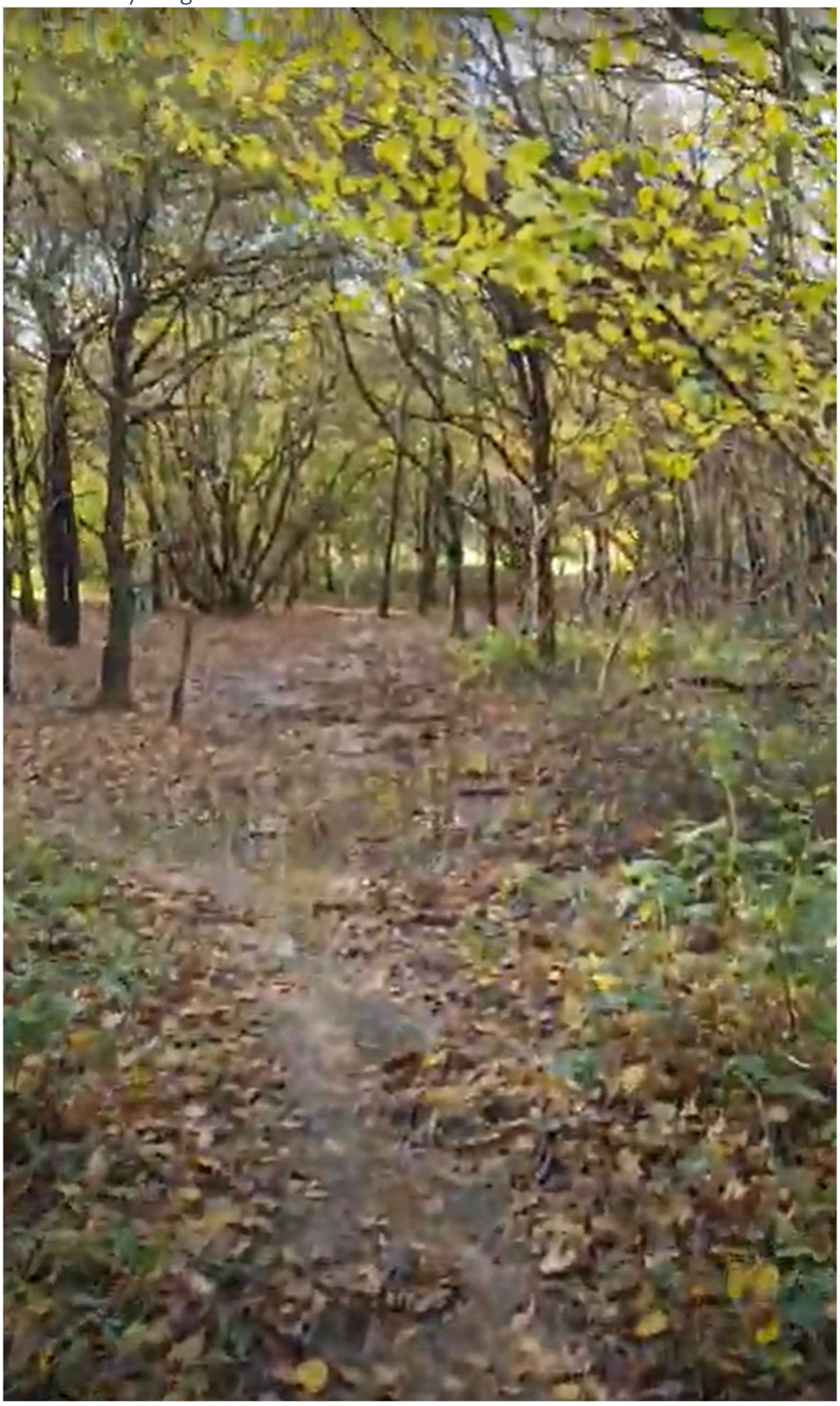
41. Budletts Wood alder carr impact from SANG changes nearby, no assessment found to changes imposed by SANGS and housing.

Budletts Wood- alder carr carriage drive



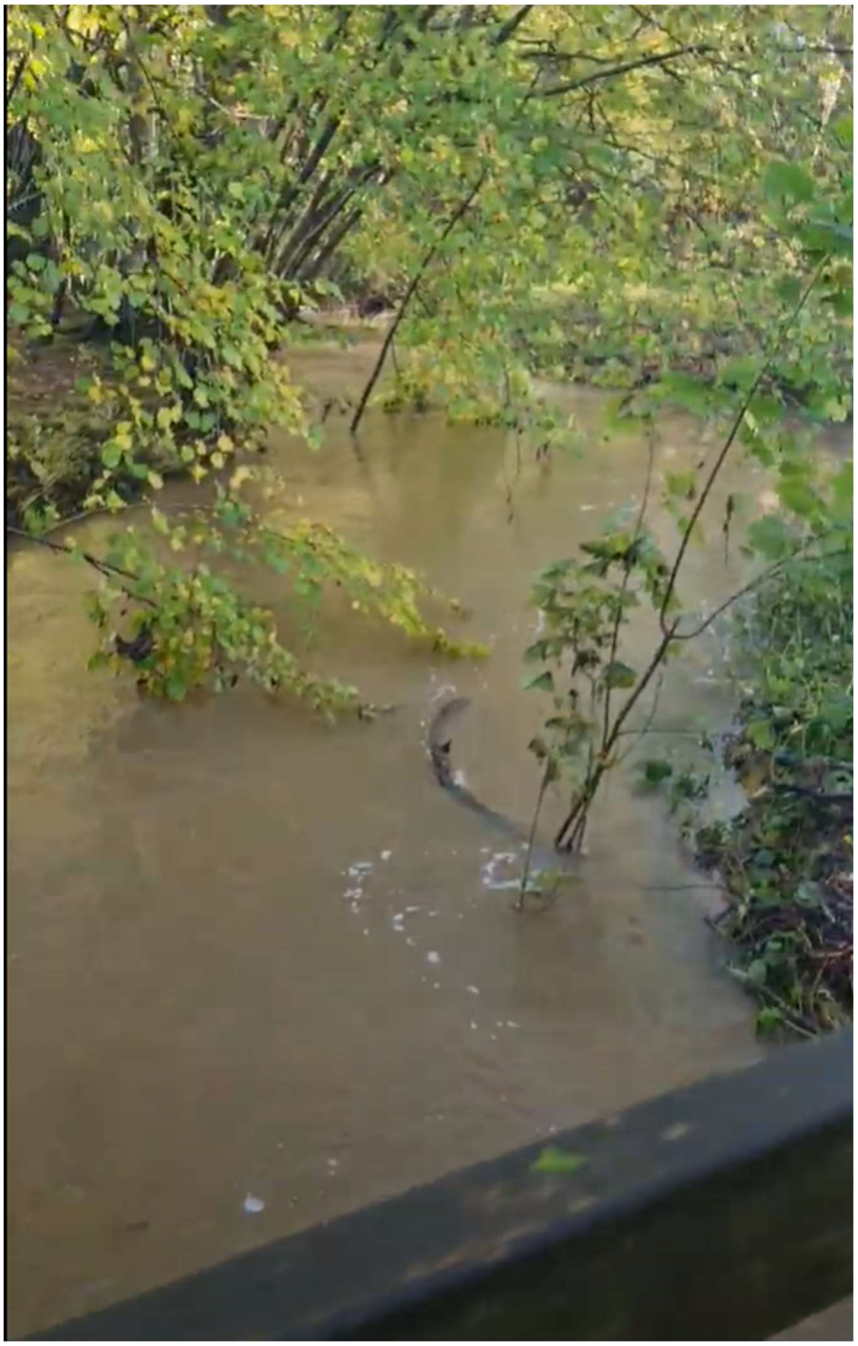
42. Budletts Wood, alder carr. The badger sett and rock outcrops are to the right, the valley fills up with water during rain. Of concern, this is open and connected to the proposed SANG 4C area, and re-consultation impact to the water flows of Budletts Wood downstream of the SANG. The impact on this ecosystem and the active badger community which uses the Downland fields the paths can be seen in the grasses. The impact of noise and , recreation, and vastly increased visitor numbers and off-road cycling affecting the ground flora, water and the ecosystem of the irreplaceable alder carr and carriage drive of Budletts Wood. The above is adjacent to the SANGS and examples the type of woodland water flows across the natural woodlands currently.

Budletts Wood – young woodland

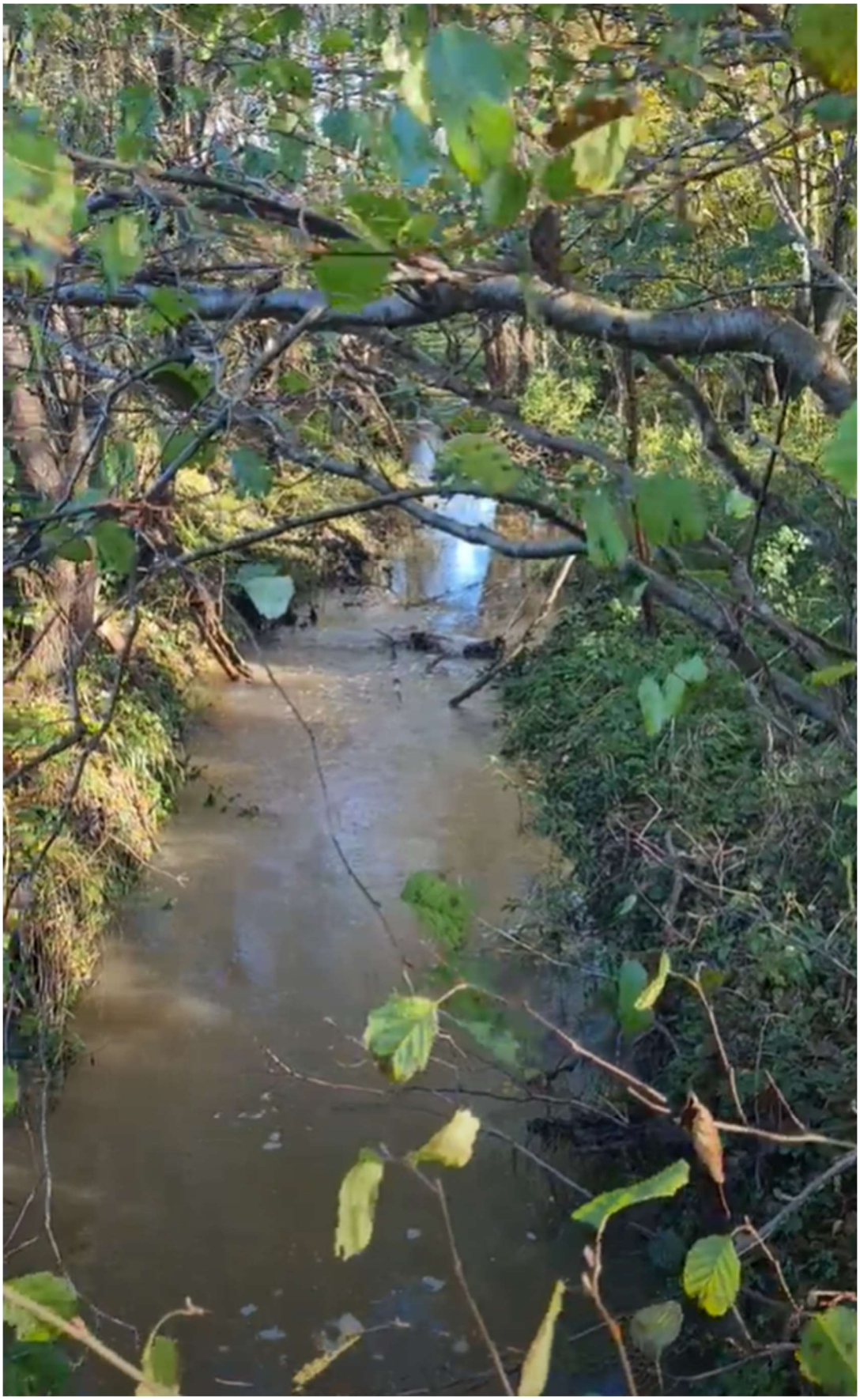


43. Young wet woodland on the corner entering the fields (is this near location of proposed sewage treatment) The water flows across the fields to Budletts Wood and Shermanreed wood, it is unclear where the suggested board-walk is but this will impact the whole woodland and quality of water flows. This area is near the carriage drive and might be a bit of Shermanreed Wood

44. Shortbridge Stream is downstream of Downlands Farm , any pollution or contamination of the aquifer, surface water and groundwater will flow directly through the woodlands to WFD Shortbridge Stream – one of the most important in the area for sea trout spawning (connects upstream through Maresfield to Ashdown Forest and downstream to Barcombe, connects below Shortbridge Weir and to the River Ouse) Shortbridge Stream is a Water Framework River. The proposed roundabout appears to be on the water course of Shortbridge Stream, Butchers Wood ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Site and very near to Shortbridge Stream Meadow Local Wildlife Site. The impact to the surface water and groundwater catchment area has not been addressed in the re-consultation. Shortbridge Stream is closest to the A22 at the suggested roundabout location. Butchers Wood has also had parts of its ancient woodland status recently changed.



45. WFD Shortbridge Stream , after rainfall and after a flood alert which were many in 2022/2023. European Eel migrate from Lake Wood to the Sargasso Sea via Shortbridge Stream

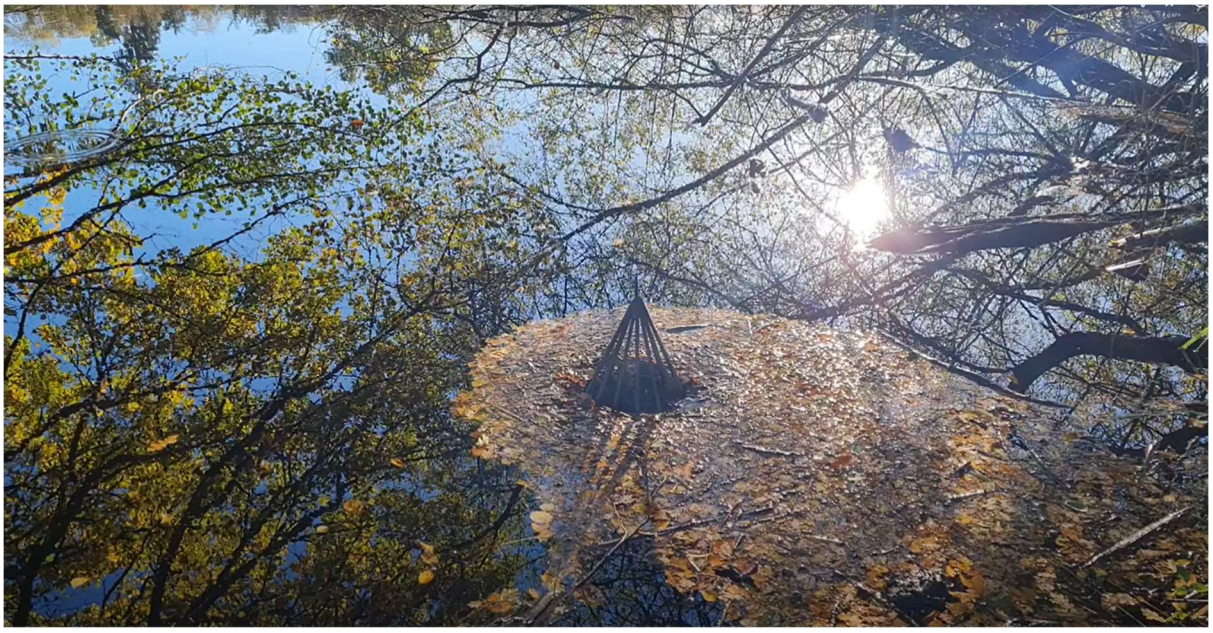


46. Shortbridge Stream, second channel, winter 2022 , PROW footbridge Butchers Wood is worth a visit to look at Shortbridge Stream to understand the connection between Downlands Farm and Lake Wood and how much water arrives at this point flowing from the North Uckfield landscape. The re-consultation has not addressed how Shortbridge Stream is protected from any harm.

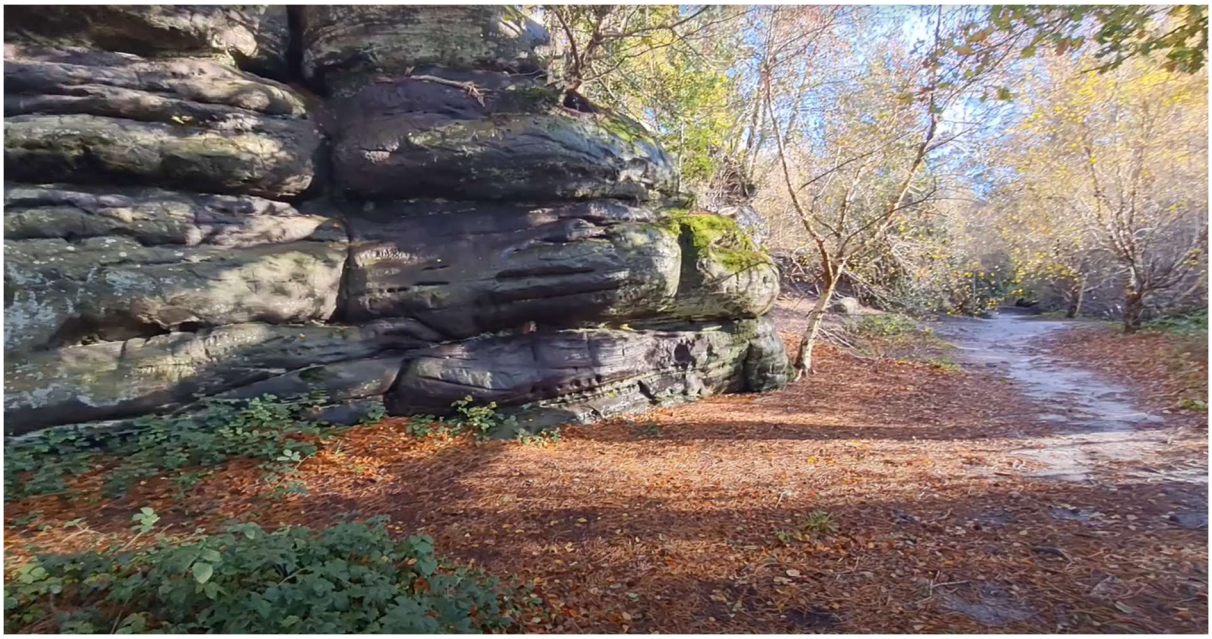
47. Water from the Downlands fields flows to parts of Lake Wood



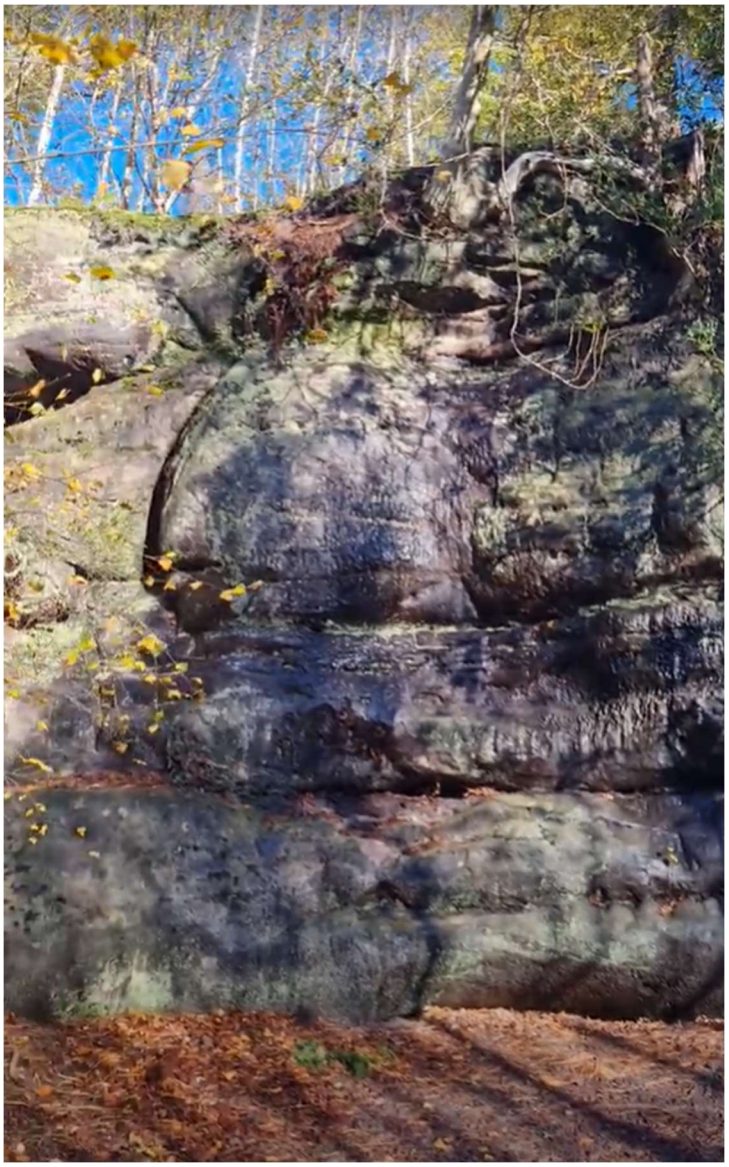
48. Water from Downlands Farm flows to Lake Wood during rain adjacent to the upper path in Lake Wood. November 2022. The setting of the lake woodland walk will be visually harmed with housing seen through the trees.



49. Lake Wood, Nov 2022. After the extreme summer drought, the lake returns to higher levels and the overflow starts working including the ghyll flows returning.



50. Lake Wood Nov 2022 following the extreme drought the rocks start weeping after the winter rainfall arrives. Dry day, rocks are dripping and weeping Downlands Farm side of the lake



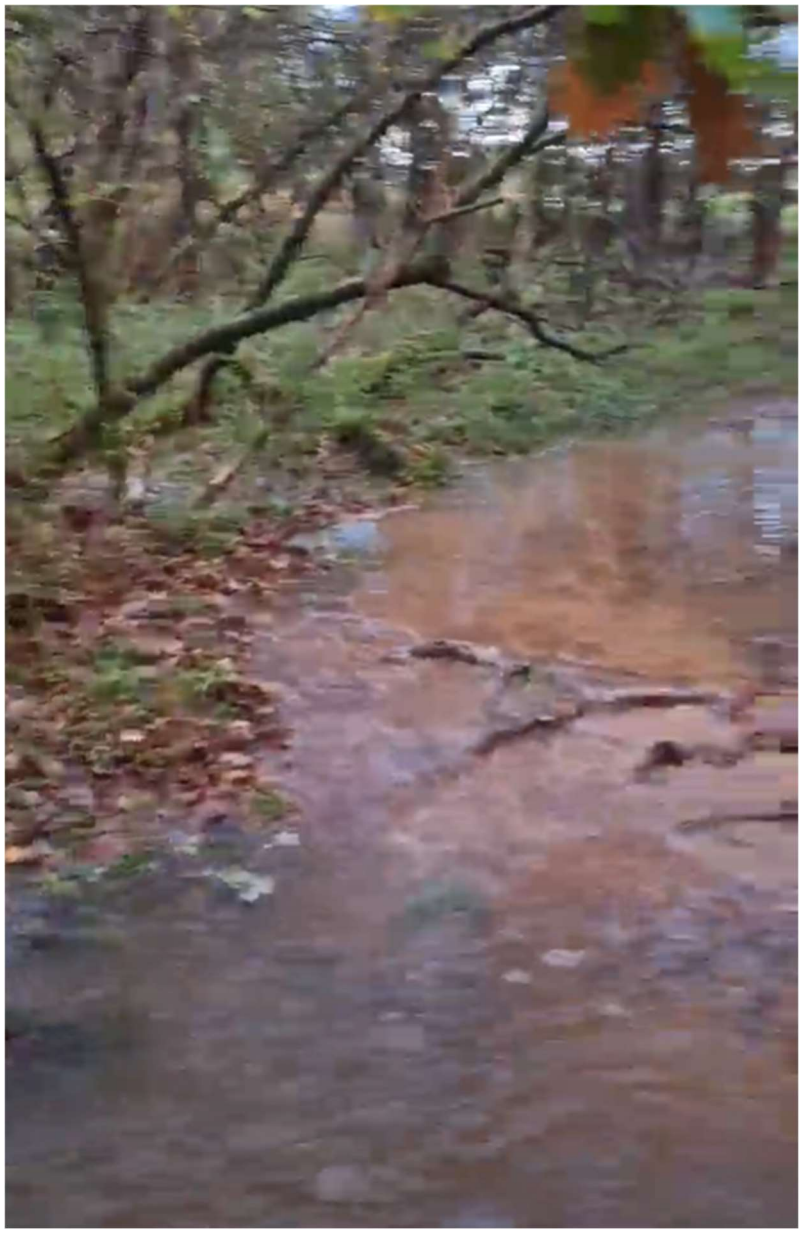
51. Lake Wood, 2022. Dry day, rocks are dripping and weeping. Downlands Farm side of the lake.



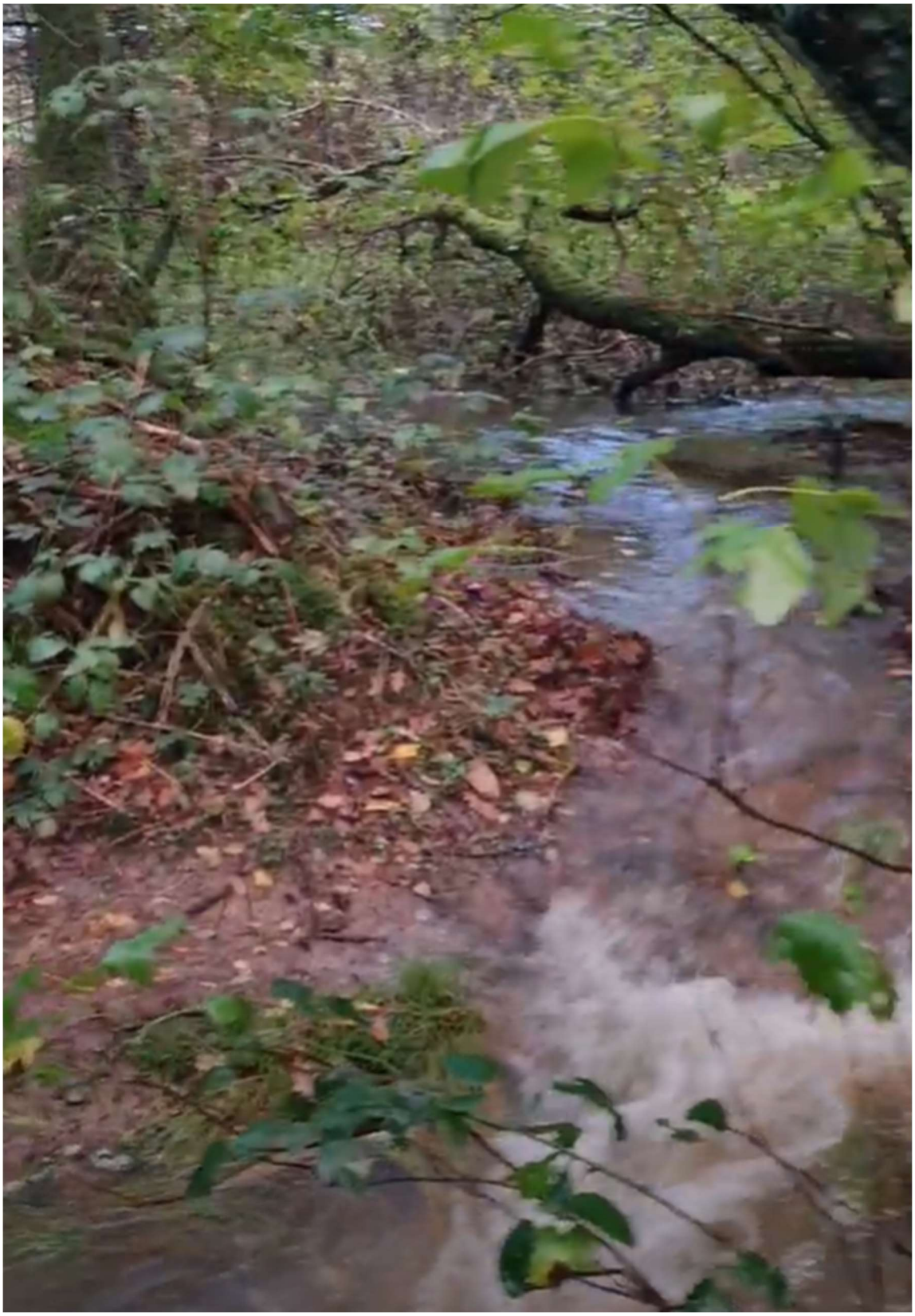
52. Lake Wood - an Ephemeral pond in Lake Wood 2022 fills from water flowing off the Downlands fields. This pond is on the upper woodland path adjacent to Downlands Farm.

53. We could not find reference to considerations of the harm and impact to Paygate Wood. Paygate Wood is another ancient woodland block, which will be impacted by changes to the ground water and changes to the surfaces of the proposed SANG.

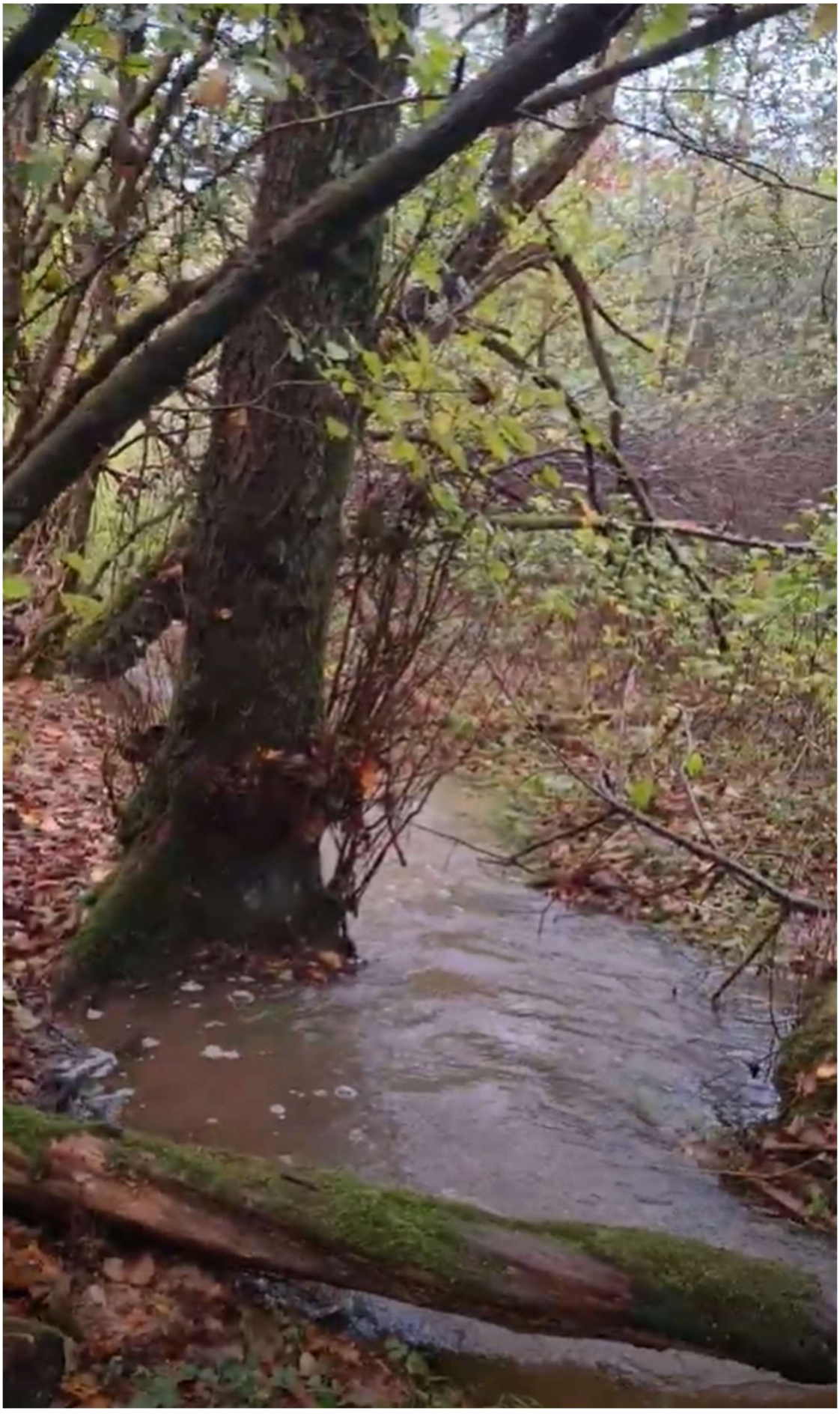
54. During winter, water flows off the proposed SANGS fields through the surrounding woodlands of Budletts Wood, Shermanreed Ghyll woodlands and through Paygate Wood. The images below were streams off the proposed SANG field surface water flows, winter 2022. The consultation changes to engineering the fields will impact water to Paygate Wood. As seen by the small hole near Shermanreed it sprouted a spring and new watercourses already flow through that woodland with one small change. Therefore, changing topography to Paygate must be given serious thought. Engineering in the re-consultation is a fictious routes when one is already used as the natural gentle pathway for many decades. The engineering of natural habitat to meet a methodology of a route to comply with route length, the proposed SANGS harms multiple irreplaceable habitats. The currently quiet woodlands have been enjoyed for decades without engineering false environments, The priority habitat already exists and supports the ancient woodland Paygate Wood.



55. Paygate Wood AW – water from the SANGS field , winter 2022. The water flows off the hay field supporting AW Paygate Wood and other ancient wet woodlands (field in the background) will be harmed with surface water changes and groundwater changes. One bore hole showed how the water changes with man-made interference.



56. Paygate Wood next to proposed SANG field, water spreads throughout the woodlands. Image is an example of the water. The new plans impact Paygate Wood but there appears to be no account of the water harm leading to another ancient woodland surrounding Downlands Farm , called Paygate Wood AW from the fields.



57. Paygate Wood example of water flow

Downlands Copse / Longwood Gill Woodland Copse – Pond



58. Downland Copse /Longwood Gill Woodland Copse – GCN pond. Of concern is the meta-population of GCN across the area and lack of reference to Lake Wood, Gormanstan, Budletts and that the area was formerly assessed as meeting SSSI for Amphibians and Reptiles (Stenning, 2022). Engineering the habitats surrounding this important pond which has a meta-population connected to all the ponds in the area.

Downlands Farm meadows – Spring-fed Mole hills

59. During the 2022 winter rain, mole hills at the top of the meadows by Gormanstan had springs gushing from them. It is very hard to recreate with an image, but they were gushing, to our thinking this potentially means the water is very near the surface at the top of the site from the aquifer below. Are these therefore, aquifer spring-fed mole hills. These were next to the Gormanston garden boundary, above Longwood Gill





60. Two molehills with water springs flowing out of them 2022, top of fields Downlands Farm