

Cuckmere and Pevensey Levels Catchment Partnership

Turkey Barn – Seven Sisters Country Park – 21st October 2015

Minutes and Actions

Attendees			
Henri Brocklebank (HB)	SWT – Partnership Host	Robin Kelly (RK)	Natural England
Jenny Armiger (JA)	EA – Partnership Coordinator	Natalie Bumpuss (NB)	Wealden DC
Rosie Piper (RP)	SERT	Dave Morgan (DM)	National Trust
Dave Brown (DB)	SERT – Partnership Host	Dan Sargeant (DS)	EA
Fran Southgate (FS)	SWT	Jane Birch (JB)	EA
Gill Hesselgrave (GH)	Cuckmere Flood Forum	Louise Parker (LP)	EA
Robin Jones (RJ)	Groundworks	Cat Fuller (CF)	EA
Paul Linwood (PL)	Southern Water	John Gallop (JG)	EA
Lance Gearing (LG)	Pevensey Advisory Group	Clare Whistler (CW)	Underwater Edge
Marc Lamb (ML)	Cuckmere Valley Parish Council	Charlotte Still (CS)	Underwater Edge
Mike Richardson (MR)	Southdown Angling Association	Mary Devlin (MD)	Secretariat
Richard Brown (RB)	Cuckmere Valley Parish Council		

1. Welcome and Introductions

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting, including JA who has returned as Partnership Coordinator. RP is now on a secondment at SERT and is working on the Sessingham Weir project. DB and HB gave a background to where the Partnership is in terms of funding – Defra funding is still uncertain for next year.

2. Project Updates

2.1 Sessingham Weir

RP gave a presentation on the project and the progress so far (see presentation document for more information). During investigations a South East Water pipe was found to be located near the weir so investigation work has been carried out to locate it, in order to assess the best approach. It was found to run underneath the weir, meaning total removal would not be possible. Instead the gate has been opened permanently and ongoing monitoring is taking place to assess water levels up and downstream from the weir. RP is meeting with SVS [SAA?] to discuss further work, such as raising water levels below the weir and improve fish passage.

Project funding will need to be spent by March however there may be a case to extend that a few weeks, depending on weather conditions over the winter and how that affects the analysis.

Actions

- **RP** to keep the Partnership updated on progress with the Sessingham Weir project

2.2 Cuckmere Structures

DS gave a presentation on two key structures along the Cuckmere which EA currently maintain – Milton Lock and Tumblers Bay (see presentation document for more information). These structures have been historically funded by Flood Risk Management (FRM), however, there is no justification to continue FRM funding so the EA and are currently looking at options for maintaining these two structures in the future. They are currently used to control water levels and manage flows of fresh and saline water, but are barriers to fish passage. Options are to carry on maintaining them, change the level at which the gates open and close, or remove them.

DB welcomed comments from the Partnership. JA will organise a meeting for it to be discussed in more detail, to see if the Partnership could be involved or contribute to future options.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JA, HB, RB, RP, JA, DS, DM, DB to meet to discuss structures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB/JB to look into the SSSI status and how it affects how the structures should be maintained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL to provide feedback to DS

2.3 South East Water's Catchment Based Approach

RK gave a presentation about the catchment based approach project, Upstream Thinking, which Natural England have carried out in partnership with South East Water (see presentation for more information). They are hoping to reach hard to reach farmers with the programme and are keen to get more people involved. RK explained that NE through the Catchment Sensitive Farming are withdrawing from this work, and it is continuing through water company projects.

South East Water are regularly testing the following water quality parameters within the Cuckmere and Waller's Haven DrWPA SGZs:

2,4,5-T	Clopyralid	Linuron	Propazine
2,4-D	Cyproconazole	MCPA	Propyzamide
2,4-DB	Dicamba	MCPB	Quinmerac
Ammonia /Ammonium Ions	Dichlobenil	Mecoprop (MCP)	Simazine
Atrazine	Dichlorprop	Metaldehyde**	Terbutryn
Azoxystrobin	Diuron	Metazachlor	Tri-allate
Bentazone	Epoxiconazole	Nitrate	Tricopyr
Boscalid	Fluroxypyr	Nitrite	Trietazine
Bromoxynil	Flusilazole	Oxadixyl	Turbidity
Carbendazim	Flutriafol	Pendimethalin	
Carbetamide	Gamma-HCH (Lindane)	Phosphorus-SRP	
Chlortoluron	Isoproturon	Prometryn	

They will also be installing extra monitoring for rainfall and river flow in the Cuckmere soon. Partners are welcome to request this information from RK.

2.4 Pollution Assessment Volunteers and Bathing Water Quality

JG provided an update on the project which is being run by the EA and HVA (Hastings Voluntary Action). Volunteers have been carrying out assessments of pollution incidents and monitoring points have been set up around Hastings to monitor water quality and anything unusual that the volunteers find, such as invasive species, in order to report back,. They are currently working on improving the procedure and how things are logged. There haven't been any major incidents to report so far. There are 6 volunteers covering the streams at the moment and they are looking to extend the area and number of volunteers. In the meantime they will be monitoring the project over the next 12 months.

Bathing water figures are due out on 5th November. The focus has been Hastings and JG thinks the figures are looking promising. Volunteers have been involved in looking out for issues such as misconnections.

2.5 Septic Tanks

HB provided a summary of the work that the Test and Itchen catchment partnership have been carrying out on their phosphate project. They have produced plan and a range of resources which they are sharing with other catchment partnership to use, in return for a £1500 contribution towards the project. The project has looked at where the phosphate failures are and a map is being produced to show the water bodies thought to be affected by domestic septic tanks. They have also gathered information from the EA and water companies on where sewage networks are and are putting together an information pack for homeowners, shops, parishes and community groups,

to explain how they can reduce the pollution, through changing dishwasher tablets, for example. The pack will provide generic information which can then be used in any area.

HB suggested this would be a good project to link up with the pollution volunteers, for them to hand out the information wherever an opportunity arises.

2.6 Pennywort

JB provided an update on the project being carried out by the EA, Natural England and Brighton University, which looks at the impact of pennywort on water quality, how to control it, and the impact of climate change. Monitoring is being carried out on 60 sites. Historically it has been controlled by manually removing it, but they have also been looking at using chemical spray to treat ditch areas. Where treatment has been carried out there has been a 50-70% reduction. JB has been investigating seed production and germination – she has achieved the first germination in Europe. This will impact on how it is managed in the future. JB has also found that pennywort can tolerate a wider range of PH than previously thought – where phosphate or nitrate levels are higher it doesn't necessarily correlate with a higher level of pennywort, although less pennywort has been found in areas with a very high PH.

2.7 Coastal Marine Environment

CF provided a summary of the Sussex Marine and Coastal Marine Forum (SMaCF), a collection of partners (including the EA) who promote sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment. CF is speaking to all catchment partnerships with coastal areas in order to gather information to see how we can integrate coastal issues with land management. There is a Seaview project in the Solent which is providing a framework of all the relevant EU directive requirements and targets involved, in order to link up coastal and freshwater. The framework provides an accessible platform to look at specific issues and how to tie them in with legislation. Southampton Water has been using it and will be holding a workshop about issues in that area and how the framework can help. CF explained that Seaview project and the framework it has produced will be a good way for the Partnership to look at estuarial waters – HB sits on the Forum so will provide a link with them.

2.8 Sussex Heritage Coast

CF explained that the National Park is producing a management plan to fulfil heritage coast requirements. Jeremy Burgess is leading this at SDNP and they are now looking at disseminating the plan for comments. The plan is available on the Partnership website: www.cplcp.org.uk/news-and-events

Actions

- **ALL** to feedback comments to Jeremy Burgess

3. Partnership Actions

The draft Partnership Action plan was circulated to everyone prior to the meeting and the group discussed the work identified. Defra funding is still uncertain for next year so the work may be limited. The key items discussed are summarised below and further discussion will take place at the next meeting.

3.1 Water quality and diffuse pollution

Bathing water and septic tanks – as discussed earlier, work is underway in relation to this, but suggestions on how this could be expanded are welcome. For example walkovers could be carried out to build on the work.

Catchment sensitive farming – RK explained that NE are withdrawing from this work, however it will continue through water company projects. LP offered to provide information on diffuse pollution areas to focus on. MR highlighted the pilot work being carried out by the EA to allow some farmers to carry out dredging, which the Partnership will need to monitor in terms of habitat disruption. DS agreed to provide more information on the scheme, which does not affect the catchment area yet.

Water company assets management plans – water companies are currently in negotiation with the EA over water quality investment schemes and are looking at the environmental and economical aspects. The National Environment Programme (NEP) which details these schemes will be signed off in January 2016. PL will be able to provide more information at the next meeting.

RJ highlighted issues with water quality, habitats and flooding at the Coombe Haven as a result of the Link Road – there is an existing project but it will need carrying on and he invited the Partnership to be involved. JB and DS to discuss this further with RJ

Highways Agency links – MD to look into finding a contact at the HA to be involved in the Partnership, dealing with run off pollution.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DS to keep Partnership updated on dredging pilot scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PL to provide update on water company management plans at the next meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ, DS and JB to discuss water quality issues around the Link Road.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD to investigate link at Highways Agency through ESCC contacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JA to include drainage and flood risk on the agenda for the next meeting

3.2 Fish and Habitats

The Partnership will be carrying out walkovers to identify sites for possible projects. JA asked if there was relevant information RK could provide in relation to catchment based approach and suggested there should be a sub group covering this topic.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RK to look into whether there is any relevant information from the catchment sensitive farming project which would be helpful for the Partnership work on fish passage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JA to set up a sub group for fish passage and habitats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JA to include fish populations on the agenda for next meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MR to gather historical data on fish passage

3.3 Transitional and Coastal Waters

Cuckmere Estuary Task and Finish Group – the group are currently in discussions on future work. ML feels more technical work is required but the group have yet to achieve a consensus.

3.4 Groundwater

The Champ Project will feed into this and HB, who is involved in it, will keep the Partnership updated.

3.5 Community Engagement

Volunteers were discussed under item 2.4 and the group agreed that could be expanded to involve them in other Partnership projects.

CIL – this replaces Section 106 funding and provides funding to local authorities to carry out projects. The group agreed it would be helpful to make authorities aware of our work.

3.6 Heavily Modified Water Bodies

To be discussed at the next meeting

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JA to include Heavily Modified Water Bodies on the agenda for the next meeting

4. Walking the historic shoreline of the Pevensey Levels

CW and CS gave a presentation on their Underwater Edge project.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Wealden DC consultation

Wealden Local Plan Conservation Areas - Issues, Options and Recommendations is currently out for consultation until 14th December.

http://wealden.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/wealden_local_plan/ca_wlp_ior

6. Future Meetings

Future meetings dates will be circulated shortly.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JA/MD to circulate future meeting dates.