

Cuckmere and Pevensy Catchment Partnership

Turkey Barn – Seven Sisters Country Park – 22ND October 2014

Partnership wide items – Minutes and Actions

1.1 Catchment Host and Co-ordinator Update – Henri Brocklebank and Rosie Pyper

Roles and Responsibilities

A document outlining the on roles and responsibilities for the Partnership was circulated prior to the meeting, for agreement by members. This was approved by everyone in attendance at each sub catchment meeting.

Catchment Restoration Fund

As outlined via email, a document was prepared outlining possible projects for the Partnership, which could qualify for the Fund offered by Defra, for submission by the end of October. Sessingham Weir was the most suitable project, and further walkovers in the catchment areas could also highlight other opportunities.

Defra have since postponed the deadline, possibly until December. The Partnership will continue to maintain this document, so it is ready for submission when appropriate. Members are invited to submit their ideas in the meantime.

Actions
• HB/RP to send criteria for projects to LL and RJ
• ALL to send project ideas to RP/HB with as much detail as possible
• RP to produce project log for discussion at the next meeting
• LL to provide details on Hasting bathing water project ideas and costs to RP/HB
• MR to send RP project ideas for de-silting

River Basin Management Plan and Flood Risk Management Plan consultations

The consultations gives you the chance to comment on shaping the water environment throughout England. Consider the issues, current and possible future action to protect and improve the water environment, and the outcomes that are worth achieving. The consultations on the draft RBMPs and draft FRMPs will be open for 6 months and 3 months respectively. As they are both large documents EA are producing a guide to make them more accessible. They are key for the Partnership and the WFD.

Actions
• RP to circulate the consultation guides to everyone when they are available
• ALL to submit comments to RP by 10th January 2015

Internal Drainage Board

An update was circulated via email on the situation. RP will keep everyone updated on progress.

1.2 Partnership Funding – Henri Brocklebank

There has been an underspend of the Partnership budget of £2-4k, which we propose to use to develop a Partnership website. This was agreed by everyone in attendance at each sub catchment meeting.

1.3 Transitional and coastal waters – Henri Brocklebank/ Rosie Pyper

Part of the WFD that has not yet been covered by the Partnership is transitional and coastal waters. Work is being carried out in the Solent by EA trying to identify good water standards, as part of the Sea View project.

There is an EA meeting in two weeks to look into how to get good ecological status in coastal waters and estuaries. RP will keep the group updated on this.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RP to circulate the Seaview 2027 document

1.4 Future Meetings

Possible dates for the next meeting in January will be circulated via Doodle. All other 2015 dates will be set in advance and also circulated

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MD to arrange January meeting and circulate dates for all other 2015 meetings• MD to circulate contact list for all Partnership members

Combe Haven Sub Catchment Session – Minutes & Actions

Attendees			
Henri Brocklebank (HB)	SWT - Partnership Host	Russel Long (RL)	EA
Alice Parfitt (AP)	SWT	Jane Birch (JB)	EA
Ian Hepburn (IP)	SWT	Liz Lewis (LL)	EA
Rosie Pyper (RP)	EA - Partnership Coordinator	Robin Jones (RJ)	Groundworks
Kate Rice (KP)	EA	Lance Gearing (LG)	PAG /Landowner
Dan Sargeant (DS)	EA	Mary Devlin (MD)	Partnership Secretariat
Apologies			
Gill Hesselgrave	CFF	Paul Linwood	SW
Richard Brown	CVPC	Fran Southgate	SWT
Mark Lamb	FoC/CVPC	Martin Felstead	SWT
Pete Currell	SDNPA		

2.1 Project Updates

Hastings Pollution Assessment Volunteers & Bathing Water – Liz Lewis

Please see section 5.1 for the full project update

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWT to attend next Pollution Assessment Volunteers meeting • LL to speak to John Gower about next INTERREG bid, with a view to linking the impact of climate change on bathing water.

Hollington Stream – Jane Birch

There has not been much progress on this as a pre enquiry for a development application has been submitted – JB has been trying to influence the developer to move over and not constrain the stream, so that re-meandering and SUDS work could still be carried out.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RP to write a letter to the developer, requesting they reconsider their plans or make sure any development does not interfere with the work of the Partnership – for circulation to everyone for comment • JB to send paragraph to RP for inclusion • RP to contact Jess and Laura SWT on the matter • RP to contact Mark at Sustainable Places about a joint meeting with Hasting BC

Combe Valley Countryside Park – Robin Jones

Please see section 5.2 for the full project update

There is talk of the caravan park being extended into the Countryside Park and various proposals have been submitted, which are included in RJ's document about the Park.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ to give a full presentation about the Park at the January meeting • RJ to see if his document about the Park is available online • RP to look into best way to share documents with everyone

Pevensey Sub Catchment Session – Minutes & Actions

Attendees			
Henri Brocklebank (HB)	SWT - Partnership Host	Russel Long (RL)	EA
Alice Parfitt (AP)	SWT	Jane Birch (JB)	EA
Ian Hepburn (IP)	SWT	Alex Jenks (AJ)	SEW
Rosie Pyper (RP)	EA - Partnership Coordinator	Mike Richardson (MR)	SDA
Kate Rice (KR)	EA	Natalie Bumpus (NB)	Wealden DC
Dan Sargeant (DS)	EA	Mary Devlin (MD)	Partnership Secretariat
Apologies			
Gill Hesselgrave	CFF	Paul Linwood	SW
Richard Brown	CVPC	Fran Southgate	SWT
Mark Lamb	FoC/CVPC	Martin Felstead	SWT
Pete Currell	SDNPA		

3.1 Project Updates

Pennywort update – Jane Birch

Please see section 5.3 for the full project update

Volunteers are needed to assist with collecting data for nitrogen, phosphate, pH and conductivity levels. This would require 1-2 days a month collecting data using a handheld device and submitting the data to JB.

EA are putting a project together about Crassula, which is also becoming problematic and does not respond to spraying. JB will keep the Partnership updated.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to put together details of the project and what would be required of volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MJ to contact the angling community to see if anyone would be interested in volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to speak to project partners about arranging risk assessments for volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RP will check with other Catchment Partnerships to see how they handle risk assessments

3.2 SEW Catchment Management Approach to Wallers Haven – Alex Jenks

Please see section 5.4 for the full update

There will be 1 or 2 people appointed next year to work on this project and they will be invited to attend Partnership meetings.

3.3 Water Level Management Plan – Dan Sargeant

Please see section 5.5 for the full update

3.4 AOB

Desilting at Wallers Haven and Boreham Bridge

MR and **RL** discussed desilting at Wallers Haven and Boreham Bridge – the EA have no plans to carry out this kind of work at the moment – they are only desilting upstream near Nunningham. South East Water did this in the past. **MR** highlighted that de-silting at Pevensey Haven was talked about a lot and resulted in there being no refuge for fish. The EA have a desilting plan in place which is publicly available.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DS to look into information on EA de-silting programme and send it to RP for circulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MR to email project ideas to RP in relation to this

Cuckmere Sub Catchment Session – Minutes & Actions

Attendees			
Henri Brocklebank (HB)	SWT - Partnership Host	Russell Long (RL)	EA
Ian Hepburn (IP)	SWT	Adrain Harrison (AT)	NT
Rosie Pyper (RP)	EA - Partnership Coordinator	Mary Devlin (MD)	Partnership Secretariat
John Gallop (JG)	EA	Chris Manning (CM)	SDNPA
Louise Forder (LF)	EA	Alex Jenks (AJ)	SEW
Kate Rice (KR)	EA	Mike Richardson (MR)	SAA
Dan Sargeant (DS)	EA	Andy Thomas (AT)	WTT
Apologies			
Gill Hesselgrave	CFF	Paul Linwood	SW
Richard Brown	CVPC	Fran Southgate	SWT
Mark Lamb	FoC/CVPC	Martin Felstead	SWT
Pete Currell	SDNPA		

4.1 Chalk Block Model – Chris Manning

Please see presentation circulated with minutes

The project is part of a wider South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement, Area which is receiving NIA funding and is aimed at expanding rights of way and chalk grassland. This project looks at nitrate levels in groundwater and how they can be improved. The presentation looks at work in Eastbourne and Seaford, where chalk block are more uniform and low connectivity, so nitrate levels are relatively low compared to other catchment areas.

The Partnership need to be aware of nitrate levels and consider actions that can be taken to prevent deterioration, with respect to WFD. However the Drinking Water Directive is a bigger driver for the project.

4.2 SEW Catchment Management Approach to Wallers Haven – Alex Jenks

Please see section 5.4 for the full project update

There will be 1 or 2 people appointed next year to work on this project and they will be invited to attend Partnership meetings.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AJ & CM to share information on Groundwater work

4.3 Project Updates

Cuckmere Structures – Russel Long

There has been no progress on this work since last year. A report will be produced by the EA for consultation, but this has been delayed due to other work.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RL to circulate consultation document when it is available

Sessingham Weir – Louise Forder

The EA are arranging for a contractor to cost and scope the work. There is an internal EA meeting planned to talk about Sessingham and Cuckmere, and they will then speak with SE Rivers Trust

Shermans Bridge

RP will provide an update on this at the next meeting

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RP to provide update on Shermans Bridge at the next meeting

Esmee Bid – Henri Brocklebank

The SWT's second Esmee bid is less focused on the estuary, but will still focus on the catchment areas and cover all the work that is going on.

Estuary Task and Finish Group – Henri Brocklebank

At the last meeting the group reviewed where things are and are now looking at what they can do without funding. They are planning to review the work that they have done and disseminate it to the public so that everyone is aware of the work that is going on.

WTT Walkovers – Andy Thomas

AT has been working with MR, looking at waterways around the Cuckmere – many have very old structures which could easily be removed, but the issue is knowing who the landowner is to arrange this. A workshop will be organised with landowners and local interest groups so there is an organised approach to tackling the structures. AT will put together project ideas for the next meeting, including the workshop

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AT/RP/HB to discuss workshop with landowners and interest groups in Cuckmere area – with a view to removing structures and creating fish passage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AT to put together project ideas

4.2 AOB

RL suggested that the Partnership would be a good forum to consult with on the EA's annual maintenance programme and small projects, and could add value to and inform their work.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ALL to discuss the Partnership feeding into the EA's annual maintenance programme and projects at the next meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RL to circulate the EA's programme to the Partnership when it is available next summer

Full Project Updates

5.1 Hastings Pollution Assessment Volunteers & Bathing Water – Liz Lewis, EA

The **Pollution Assessment Volunteers** project has been started, with the aim to engage local communities, with them responding to local pollution issues. EA, SERT, HVA and SWT are all involved and the project has funding of £5k from EA and £5k from SWT.

There is a project plan in place and the first stage will be to train trainers, who will then recruit and manage volunteers. HVA are aiming to recruit about 30 volunteers, covering Alexandra Park and Hollington Stream. It is hoped that the project will go live in November, starting small with pollution, then, building up to look at invasive species and have flood wardens.

HVA are keen to bring SWT into the project as a way of appointing more volunteers.

The **Bathing Waters Project** has been running for two years in Hastings, where they are very vulnerable to household pollution, due to sewage and mis-connection issues. Southern Water are looking at this as a major project – there are many instances where one manhole is being used for both clean and dirty pipes, which is not good practice and has led to contamination. Southern Water is responsible for addressing these issues. In addition to the work of Southern Water, there is also SUDS work going on, which breaks down the bacteria naturally.

There is also a community led awareness campaign called Clean Seas Please (www.cleanseasplease.net) aimed at improving bathing water quality, and as part of that a Shore Academy was piloted last year with primary school children, which was very successful. EA will be funding more so they can be rolled out to more schools.

EA are looking at producing a new website for bathing quality, linking into to Clean Seas Please, and a communications group have been set up to strengthen links and achieve more joined up messages on the subject.

It is difficult to predict how standards will improve by 2015 as it is difficult to model. Hastings has always met the previous bathing water standard, but the new one is twice as strict and measures other criteria. If they fail the council must inform and warn the public.

5.2 Combe Valley Countryside Park – Robin Jones, Groundworks

The Combe Valley Countryside Park is designated between Hasting and Bexhill – the idea has been developed over the last two years, with the aim of providing more green space in the area. It includes areas of beach, landfill, sports fields, farmland, waste and water treatment site.

Last year it was thought that funding (from a Section 106 Biffa agreement) would stop and so not much progress has been made. There is not much funding left and some of it has been ear marked for ranger work.

Groundwork are looking to increase the scale of the project without funding from the Council and are trying to get community interest group set up, involving the council, SWT and stakeholders, so that it is more of a community effort. Most of the land is owned by Hastings BC so they want to know the impact the park would have on them.

The concept of a community interest group is being reviewed this autumn, with a view to agreeing the governance and how the park will generate money. A visitor hub building is being built, to give the park an identity/hub.

RJ will be giving a full presentation about the park in the January meeting.

5.3 Pennywort update – Jane Birch, Environment Agency

This has been a challenging season for the project as it has been so warm and they were not able to do much spraying due to the longer wet season. Therefore there has not been much progress this year.

This year they decided on areas that will be sprayed twice a year, at the beginning and end of the season. The work has been done in partnership with Natural England and they will be using Roundup, which has been assessed as having a very low impact on other wildlife.

Mechanical control has been going on over the summer and there is now two years' worth of survey data, pre and post treatment. This years' data is currently being worked on – water and sediment samples were taken, based on WFD methodology, as well as nutrient and phosphate levels.

For the de-silted watercourses there is no marked change in phosphate levels. The sites downstream of the sewage treatment works have also stayed the same. Nitrate levels have not been assessed yet. 8 sites are being tested on a monthly basis, to support annual data.

Seed was collected from one of the sites to see if it could germinate, and therefore increase spread, as it is thought that this is how it entered the watercourses in the first place.

They would now also like to look at water quality – nitrogen, phosphate, pH and conductivity, but new equipment and volunteers are needed for that. This would require 1-2 days a month to collect the data using a hand held device

University students have been approached but have not taken up the opportunity. MR will be asking the angling community if they would be interested.

Ideally they would like to be able analyse the effect of each type of treatment. Part of the area is restricted from being sprayed because of organic farming restrictions. Natural England have tried speaking to the Soil Association about this but they need evidence to prove that it would have no or little impact on the farms.

Another non native species present on the Levels is Crassula. This is becoming more problematic and spraying doesn't work. EA are putting a project together about it and JB will keep the Partnership updated.

5.4 South East Water Planned Catchment Management 2015 to 2020 – Alex Jenks

Overview

As part of our business planning process, SEW have submitted proposals to OFWAT for catchment management work to commence on the River Cuckmere and the Wallers Haven from April 2015. This work is driven by the Water Framework Directive and primarily relates to riverine water quality and the need to reduce agricultural diffuse pollution.

Key Points:

SEW anticipate a final determination from OFWAT on these plans during December 2014. SEW are proposing catchment management work in the following areas:

- River Cuckmere upstream of Arlington Reservoir.
- Wallers Haven upstream of our water treatment works on the A271 at Boreham Hill Bridge.

Work will be delivered as follows:

- Catchment Investigation Work: 2015 to 2017
- Pilot Delivery Schemes based on Catchment Investigation work: 2017 to 2020.
- Catchment Measures to control Metaldehyde: 2015 to 2020

Catchment Investigation to include:

1. Gathering data and evidence to understand water quality issues in the catchment.
2. Water quality monitoring in order to develop a robust environmental baseline.
3. Catchment characterisation using data sets such as soils, land use, topography, rainfall, flow analysis, geology.
4. Define areas of high risk within catchment and target catchment delivery work.
5. Pesticide modelling to determine likely success of control measures.
6. Catchment walkovers to identify hot spot areas and run off pathways.

Pilot Delivery to include:

1. Farm visits / farm appraisals including recommendations to tackle soil, nutrient and pesticide losses.
2. Grant agreements with target farms to deliver on farm capital work.
3. Workshops and events to provide advice and promote best practice.
4. Subsidised training to enable sprayer operators to obtain industry certification.
5. Monitoring of pilot farms to measure success of capital improvements.

Metaldehyde Control:

Some catchment investigation work is already underway in the Cuckmere & Pevensey catchment in relation to Metaldehyde which is a pesticide used on arable farms to control slugs. SEW have a statutory obligation to tackle Metaldehyde levels that exceed the Drinking Water Standard in our surface water sources.

Effective Metaldehyde control can only be achieved via integrated catchment management which attempts to tackle the problem in field rather than at the water treatment works. Control measures may include:

1. Workshops and events to highlight the issue and promote best practice
2. Free slug pellet applicator testing to ensure machinery is spreading at correct rate
3. Financial incentives to use a non-metaldehyde slug pellet

5.5 Water Level Management Plan – Dan Sargeant, Environment Agency

The EA carried out a review of water level management for Pevensey Levels in 2006 on areas thought to be failing due to poor weather management. This looked at what was required to protect diverse flora and fauna. A project was then set up, running over 3 years, aimed at maintaining the field level, reducing the number of structures and to reduce the amount of structures in use.

Over the past year the EA have been putting in monitoring systems to monitor if there is a change in water levels. As the EA are longer wishing to be the IDB they are reviewing the data and planning to give more information and data to the local council so it can help inform IDBs.

The EA are also looking at the impact of joined up and separate IDBs and the operation of pumps – modelling what would happen if they weren't used, since they have high running costs. They will also be creating an operating manual for EA and other organisations looking after Pevensey Levels – including costings and high level pump scenarios, to help inform council decisions.

There are a couple more months of the project, where they will be reviewing what has been achieved. This has involved a rapid turnaround to get the correct information to councils, using Pevensey Advisory Group to help advise them.