Stour Catchment Initiative

Minutes - Steering Group Meeting 1

30th April 2014 10:00 – 13:00

Urban Wildlife Centre - Corfe Mullen

Present:

Nick Giles
Mark Burton
Ben Rayner
Annabel King
Ruth Barden
Caroline Francis
Sarah Williams
Julian Wardlaw
Lydia O’Shea

Apologies: Doug Kite, Matt Uren, Clare Buckerfield

1. The role of the steering group/ terms of reference

It was agreed the role of the group would be to agree the issues, solutions, prioritise and plan task groups. The Steering group to also source funding opportunities. The terms of reference from Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative to be adapted for the Stour CI, to be circulated to group for any comments. LOS

2. Balance of group

Wessex Chalk Streams Rivers Trust (WCSRT) will have a seat on the steering group, Pete Reading, Nick Giles or Jon Bass will attend each meeting depending on availability and particular expertise.

Annabel King will represent various departments within Dorset County Council and will feed relevant information back to DCC or the Stour CI.

Ensure there is a wide circulation of minutes and newsletters to keep stakeholders informed. Circulate to waste companies, aggregates, fisheries and cress farms and any other businesses. Waste and aggregate companies may be a good opportunity for match funding in habitat restoration projects. Need to have a contact involved for Christchurch Harbour. Ben to ask IFCA next week in a meeting if they know of a suitable contact to sit on the steering group BR.

Concern was raised over the nutrients from Holdenhurst STW going into Christchurch Harbour. Discussion about Wessex Waters plans for P removal in catchment, the plan is for P removal at 4 STWs further up the catchment to give longer length of river.
benefit as Holdenhurst is towards the mouth of the river. Ruth mentioned possibility of trials involving algal bioreactor to remove P in final effluent at Holdenhurst. There will be investigations in AMP6 of the nutrient contributions to the river from Holdenhurst.

Need one of the universities to sit on the Steering Group. LOS to contact Gary Fones (Portsmouth Uni) about the possibility of sitting on the steering group to represent both the universities and Christchurch Harbour. LOS

Dr Rob Britain was suggested as a potential partner for the steering group. Professor at Bmth Uni. Extensive work on ecosystems and specialist in invasive species. Nick Giles to provide contact details. NG

3. Restoration Plan (Ben)

The draft restoration needs a period of consultation, the steering group has been asked to review it. Ben to circulate the plan and questions eg is the plan fit for purpose, any local knowledge that can be added. It would be good for Stour CI to be integrated into the delivery of the plan via the task group.

At next steering group meeting Ben and Sarah Galsworthy will give feedback on comments. It was suggested that a task group should be formed – restoration plan delivery group. There is £25k funding available this year, £3m over the plan period. It would be useful if Nick could do a like-for-like comparison of the plan for Avon. Nick volunteered to organise a brief presentation on the Avon, useful ‘lessons learnt’. Needs to be on the agenda if/ when a task group set up for restoration plan.

EA – Integrated Environmental Programme is a 6 year plan. Three bids have gone in for restoration plans (all protected areas). A bid has also been submitted for a pot of money for ‘Cinderella’ habitat restoration areas (areas without designations). The restoration plan area starts at the Lower Lydden so the Upper Stour where diffuse pollution a particular problem is not included. The restoration plan is not about water quality although quality will be a benefit of some of the projects.

The Avon CI used the phrase ‘WFD Plus’ to encompass all aspects of water environment.

Ben to let Stour CI know when the budgets will be confirmed (likely to be early 2015). Ben will also feedback on if the Stour Restoration Fund will be available going forwards. BR

We need to get a number of projects ‘on the shelf’ ready to go should funding become available at short notice. All partners to feedback to LOS any projects to be considered, to be discussed at next steering group meeting. This could be a function of the task groups when they are set up. All

£25k available this year. Need ideas for a pilot project. First get the plan signed off by project approval board. Maybe involve National Trust as they are amenable to
fry bays. WCSRT could do the fry bays easily. Discuss potential pilot project at next meeting.

4. **EA Reason for Failure (Ben)**

There are many changes in water body classifications between 2009 and 2013. The reasons for this are:

- a) More information is available to inform the classification
- b) Change in WFD tools e.g. fish/ macrophytes

Ben will circulate spreadsheet of classification and new WFD limits etc. **BR**

Classification is very important as driver for funding.

There are gaps in info for classification – should be a role of the Stour CI to help fill these gaps.

If a water body is good status, it won’t be looked at for 6 years unless there is an issue.

Ruth fed back from River Liaison panel – there is frustration that there is more data available for classification but at the moment it can’t be accepted.

The Stour CI needs a task gap to focus on data and monitoring to identify if classification is realistic and to identify gaps in data.

The area sub group meetings have expressed concern over the discrepancies in fish data. Eddie Hopkins (Bmth Uni) has written a report reviewing the fisheries data and WFD classification, the report includes recommendation and costing’s to improve confidence in classifications and also recommendations for filling data gaps. Lydia to circulate. **LOS**

Steering group to discuss at next meeting how we should prioritise projects. Need confidence in classification to be able to prioritise.

Ben will circulate info from PHCI monitoring task group on WFD and other requirements. **BR**

5. **Agricultural group**

LOS fed back from first agricultural group meeting.

Suggested that a commercial land agent may be useful to sit on agricultural group (Savilles). Good on funding and grants.

West Country Rivers Trust developed and implemented ‘Upstream thinking’ – it was mentioned that actual results may not have been as good as has been indicated.
Grant finder system would be useful for the agricultural community. Land agent may be able to help with this.

Need to engage with big land owners to encourage tenants to adopt better practice.

CaBA need to deal with the supermarkets nationwide rather than individual catchments.

Blackmoor Vale Creamery have the Dairy Company as agent. JW to pass contact onto LOS. JW

Main point carried forward from agricultural group is that more CSF advise needed and also grants to support changes required.

In Amp 6 there is a memorandum of understanding, Sembcorp will fund a full-time CSF advisor to cover the whole Stour for the AMP6 period.

Consider attending/having stand with CSF at agricultural shows (such as Gillingham and Shaftesbury). To discuss with agricultural group.

Farmers on agricultural group are best placed to drum up support from farming community.

Malcolm Bond has written summary for the Stour CI to review on National Strategy for Catchment Sensitive Farming – to feed into CaBA/DEFRA. All to review and send comments back to Lydia. All

6. Actions/ Solutions

Lydia to circulate actions list to group LOS.

All to complete missing columns ASAP (by 15th May at latest) to help prioritise which actions to feed into draft river basin management plan with extra column for priority (L,M,H). All

Ben to let Lydia know deadline to feed into RBMP. BR

Nick Giles will circulate newsletter to their members.

LOS to write next newsletter and circulate to Steering Group for comment. LOS

Web-site – once up and running, needs updating with recent info including partners and logos etc. LOS

7. AOB

Dorset Governance Group – gives opportunity to apply for funding as operational catchments. £18k available.

Dorset operational catchments includes, PHCI, Stour CI and Dorset Coastal Streams that currently has no host. Dorset Coastal Forum interested in hosting.
One governance group for operational areas to help ensure consistency and to help funding bids. Sub catchments will operate individually but will have advantage of overarching governance group to apply for funding etc. All agreed it is a sensible plan to have one governance group.

Ruth to circulate map of the sub catchments including Dorset Coastal Streams. RB

Life funding to help deliver WFD is available. The governance group is looking to apply. There is a meeting at the end of May with a consultant that has experience in bids for Life. Expression of interest has to be in for October. A workshop may be needed to establish what is wanted from the bid.

AONB Management Plan Consultation – in previous sub area meeting it was suggested that the Stour CI should co-ordinate a reply. Annabel to find out more about this and feed back to Lydia. AK

Circulate newsletter to tourist board/ tourist information. LOS

SuDS – draft legislation has gone to Europe, will be back in 4 months. If approved may be accepted by end of this year. SuDS approval boards would then be set up with a specific planning remit. Initially it would apply to larger developments then over time would filter down to smaller developments. Annabel will keep the group informed of progress on this legislation.

Chair – a chair is needed. Fiona Bowles was suggested as suitable Chair. LOS/RB to discuss with Fiona.

8. Next meeting: 19th May 2014 10:00 – 13:00 Urban Wildlife Centre, Corfe Mullen

Actions

1) The terms of reference from Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative to be adapted for the Stour CI, to be circulated to group for any comments. LOS

2) Ben to ask IFCA next week in a meeting if they know of a suitable contact to sit on the steering group BR.

3) LOS to contact Gary Fones (Portsmouth Uni) about the possibility of sitting on the steering group to represent both the universities and Christchurch Harbour. LOS

4) Nick Giles to provide contact details to LOS for Dr Rob Britain. NG

5) Ben to let Stour CI know when the budgets will be confirmed for the Integrated Environmental Programme (likely to be early 2015). BR

6) Ben to feedback on if the Stour Restoration Fund will be available going forwards. BR
7) We need to get a number of projects ‘on the shelf’ ready to go should funding become available at short notice. All partners to feed back to LOS any projects to be considered, to be discussed at next steering group meeting. All

8) Ben will circulate spreadsheet of classification and new WFD limits etc. BR

9) Lydia to circulate report reviewing the fisheries data and WFD classification. LOS

10) Ben will circulate info from PHCI monitoring task group on WFD and other requirements. BR

11) Blackmoor Vale Creamery have the Dairy Company as agent. JW to pass contact onto LOS. JW

12) Malcolm Bond has written summary for the Stour CI to review on National Strategy for Catchment Sensitive Farming – to feed into CaBA/DEFRA. All to review and send comments back to Lydia. All

13) Lydia to circulate actions list to group LOS.

14) **High Priority** - All to complete missing columns in action plan ASAP (by 15th May at latest) to help prioritise which actions to feed into draft river basin management plan with extra column for priority (L,M,H). All

15) Ben to let Lydia know deadline to feed into RBMP. BR

16) LOS to write next newsletter and circulate to Steering Group for comment. LOS

17) Website – needs updating with recent info including partners and logos etc. LOS

18) Ruth to circulate map of the sub catchments including Dorset Coastal Streams. RB

19) AONB Management Plan Consultation, Annabel to find out more about this and feed back to Lydia. AK

20) Circulate newsletter to tourist board/ tourist information. LOS

21) Fiona Bowles was suggested as suitable Chair. LOS/RB to discuss with Fiona. LOS/RB