

# Dorset

## Catchment Partnerships

### Dorset Strategy Group Minutes

6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 14.00-16.00

Virtual via Microsoft Teams.

#### Attendees;

|                                 |  |           |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Fiona Bowles                    | Chair  | Y         |
| Natalie Poulter                 | Catchment Partnership Co-ordinator                               | Y         |
| Emma Sumner                     | Catchment Partnership Technician                                 | Y         |
| Ruth Barden                     | Wessex Water Director of Environmental Strategy                  | Y         |
| Ian Withers                     | Environment Agency Area Environment Manager- Land and Water team | Y         |
| Keith Calder                    | EA Dorset & Hants Avon Catchment Co-ordinator                    | Y         |
| John Humphreys                  | Southern IFCA Chair  | Apologies |
| Scott West                      | Westcountry Rivers Trust Fisheries Scientist                     | N         |
| Steve Dring                     | BCP Council Senior Planning and Implementation Officer           | Y         |
| Alan Frampton                   | BCP Council Strategy & Policy Manager                            | Y         |
| Andrew Pollard                  | DWT Director of Landscape Conservation                           | Y         |
| Dominic Stubbing                | Frome, Piddle & West Dorset Rivers Association outgoing chair    | N         |
| Jon Bass                        | Wessex Rivers Trust  | Y         |
| Bridget Betts                   | Dorset Council Environmental Advice Team Leader                  | Apologies |
| Brian Richards                  | DC Flood Risk Manager  | Apologies |
| Louise Stratton/Paul Cottington | NFU farm advisor & Regional advisor respectively                 | N         |
| Ian Rees                        | Dorset AONB Countryside Officer                                  | Y         |
| Jane Wright/ Ian Alexander      | Natural England Land Management & Conservation Team Leader       | Apologies |
| Maria Clarke                    | Dorset Local Nature Partnership Manager                          | Y         |
| Luke Rake                       | Dorset LEP Chair of Rural Enterprise                             | N         |
| Nicola Hopkins                  | FWAG-SW Farm Conservation Advice Team Leader                     | Y         |

#### 1. Actions from last meeting

| Who     | What   | Progress |
|---------|--|----------|
| JW      | Pass on contact details for the new NE Dorset Communications Officer to Catchment Partnership                                  | Ongoing  |
| MC      | Provide more information on the Local Community report (mentioned last meeting) and to provide feedback at the next meeting.   | Complete |
| IW      | Provide additional information on the RBMP times scales especially the process around the Challenges and Choices consultation. | Complete |
| FB      | Feedback to partners from the National CaBA meeting on Challenges and Choices consultation and RBMP.                           | Complete |
| NP      | Create a work plan for 2020 feeding in other organisations deadlines for consultations, plans etc.                             | Complete |
| RB      | Acquire the EA's work plan for the West Country Water Resource plans   | Complete |
| BB      | Ask Annabel King about how the River Biodiversity Metric methodology   | Complete |
| NP      | Circulate for the Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan review summary   | Complete |
| RB      | Circulate PDF of WxW Final Determination   | Complete |
| RB      | Abstract costs of individual AMP7 investigations in Dorset   | Complete |
| All     | Send on organisational structures/organograms for further discussion at next meeting.  | Complete |
| All     | Review membership lists of all three groups to ensure correct partner representative.  | Complete |
| NP      | Circulate agri. meeting notes on new approach on farmer engagement within the catchment.                                       | Complete |
| JH & IW | Liaise about Shellfisheries issue and how to go forward.   | Ongoing  |
| RB      | Draw out shell fisheries elements from presentation.   | Complete |
| NP      | Share further information on norovirus   | Complete |
| ES      | Create doodle poll for next meeting.   | Complete |
| IW      | Escalate the concerns of the partnership about the ELMS scheme to EA.  | Complete |

- RB updated the group on the West Country Water Resource Plan in which the next significant phase will be July 2021 and will include partner engagement.
- The Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan is progressing, with Luke Bennett now seconded to PH Commissioners.
- FB advised that the River Biodiversity Metric methodology is available on <http://nepubprod.appspot.com/publication/5850908674228224> . The river biodiversity unit is the length of river, and condition. Quality is assessed via 'distinctiveness' (map based, obtained from River Priority Map JP006 and 'naturalness' assessment (new FBA based <https://priorityhabitats.org/> ), and 'Condition', based on MORPH survey( RHS style metric) which measures naturalness at a reach scale. The riparian zone (10m on each bank) is included from each bank and the change is reported in RBUs (not area). The mitigations are weighted for being

in catchment plans (x1.15). Difficulty and time to achieve new condition area included as factors. Chalk streams are considered 'distinctive'.

**Action NP:** Circulate work plan and timeframes documents with minutes

**Action ES:** Circulate West Country Water Resource presentation sent from RB

## 2. River Basin Management Planning

- The EA's Challenges and Choices consultation deadline has been pushed back to 24<sup>th</sup> September due to Covid-19, however Natalie has already submitted the Catchment Partnership's response which is now available on our website.
- The Catchment Plans for both the Stour and Poole Harbour are due for updating; PH is being prioritised because the plan for that catchment is older; work on the Stour catchment will begin later in the summer. Workshops (probably virtual) will be organised later in the summer to look at the details more closely. The partnership will remain flexible in our approach due to current working conditions.
- RBMP timescales haven't changed but still could; we await further clarification and information from the EA and CaBA. In the event that the RBMP catchment plan input is needed before the CPs update then the current projects lists will be used.
- CaBA reporting deadline **29<sup>th</sup> May** currently stands, with partners asked to send information to NP by 15<sup>th</sup> May. This process will also contribute to updating the Partnership's projects list across all catchments.
- Keith Calder, EA Catchment Coordinator for Dorset and Hampshire Avon, is now the single point of contact for RBMP for the EA. He intends that this will provide clarity and ease of communications between partners and the Agency.
- Still issues around timeframe for 2019 WFD data release from the EA.

**Action ES:** Update and circulate current projects list after CaBA deadline **29<sup>th</sup> May**.

**Action KC:** Ensure regular comms with the partnership (through NP) regarding WFD data and RBMP deadlines.

## 3. Future funding potential- strategy and opportunities for project delivery

Funding streams, including the EA's WEIF, seem to prefer projects delivering at catchment scale; Partnership is mindful of this trend for building future projects. Worth investigating whether there are opportunities to group projects together into a larger portfolio with an overarching theme or emphasis, to put forward for funding. Must take account of the need in a given area, both current and likely future, e.g. Nitrate reduction projects in the Stour catchment joining up to take advantage of any developer offset funding, as it's likely that new builds will have to be nitrogen neutral in future to reduce their impact on the Solent.

The EA Stage Zero project (to look at methodology) has been funded through Flood programme, but being a multi-benefit measure, there is potential for the Catchment Partners to be involved in co-ordinating/delivering the agreed measures in the areas identified.

Other projects could seek Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) which could potentially provide larger amounts of funding but need to be aware of the workload involved. This could be the start of something bigger and more long term. HLF is a two-stage process and includes a substantial component of community involvement in successful projects.

## Discussion

- RB: umbrella projects could be beneficial- looks like a true partnership approach and could attract better funding. A trial project would be required.
- JB: has been involved with HLF recently for Watercress and Winterbournes project with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust- now in the second stage of the funding bid
- KC: happy to support this also and to help look at the prioritised action plan to see what projects are suitable or could be joined up.
- HLF could be used as match funding with the EA's Water Improvement Fund.
- FB: possibility of joining up with LA schemes and projects, BCP have funds available but further discussion needed to drive this forward.
- SD reported that he had funds from the nitrate CIL pot to invest in appropriate projects. An officer will be appointed for driving the Briantspuddle project forward.
- AP: would be great to have a workshop to pull this together but need to be mindful not to try and do everything- needs to have a strong thread running through the portfolio; need to choose a suitably strong theme.
- FB: how do we get more input on what the EA's flood priorities are which could help identify suitable projects for funding. KC to have direct discussion with the flood teams within the EA- he will become the primary EA voice for the partnership.
- AF: BCP are already looking at flood risk in the lower Stour including opportunities for habitat restoration and creation; opportunity perhaps to link projects together here.
- IW: EA are drafting their own internal Local Outcomes Plan which will detail where the EA will focus effort in the catchment. Funding and focus will become clearer.

**Action IW:** Obtain release date for EA Local Outcomes Plan for the Wessex region and send on a copy to NP for dissemination to partners.

**Action KC:** Speak to flood teams within the EA to ascertain the best means of influencing flood project priorities which deliver multiple benefits.

**Action SD:** to update on new contact for the Nitrate CIL funds

#### 4. EA Strategic monitoring

There is a need for a more joined up approach with environmental monitoring especially with cuts to the EA's monitoring programme. The Strategic Monitoring Review is still ongoing within the EA but should be finalised soon. There is recognition that monitoring can be carried out by third party if this is done to the same standards. There will be several areas where there will be gaps in EA monitoring due to the current situation- some core areas not currently being dealt with.

#### Discussion

- The FBA website now has a database to input data on river habitats, through forms, to bridge some gaps in knowledge on priority habitats (<https://priorityhabitats.org/>). The aim is to update the priority habitats (which is used in the biodiversity metric). Guidance is provided on appropriate survey and estimation of 'naturalness'. Feedback would be useful. The site does not hold other available key data and we are currently unsure of how data quality is being managed or controlled.
- The national data set on barriers is thought to be incomplete (reported by Wessex RT from walk over surveys. FB asked how this data can be feed back to the EA to update the information which is one of the sources of 'naturalness' in the new NE capital atlas of natural capital.
- RB: WxW had scheduled monitoring to be carried out this year in line with the investigations- Monitoring plans have been drawn up and still trying to carry out as much as possible especially in PH. Some reductions in regularity such as STW sampling. Water quality sampling still ongoing but issues with social distancing in the lab. River ecology surveys and hydrometric studies still ongoing as they are single person works.

- There are two new monitoring trials we are aware of in Dorset: Smart Port working group WQ sensor project for Poole Harbour and 5G rural agricultural trials (early days and not much information on the 5G project yet- it may or may not be useful)- potential for funding and join up.
- Wessex RT are in talks with the EA to contribute to larger teams for fish monitoring over the summer. JB noted a delay in the deployment of temperature monitors but the EA are aware. Ready to go when working conditions are eased.
- Discussion around the need for a monitoring plan- consensus was to pause under the current circumstances.

**Action IW:** Feedback to EA on data sets from the monitoring programme that are missing information such as fish barriers-and enquire how data can be supplied by partners?

## 5. LNP current key work areas:

The LNP have now published the 'Voices for Dorset' which is now available online [here](#).

The next Board meeting is mid-June and will look at the 4 main areas of work:

- **Nature recovery planning**  
Working closely with Dorset AONB to produce a Nature Recovery Strategy for Dorset which will inform the LA Nature Recovery network plans. Workshops are currently on hold.
- **Climate and ecological emergencies**  
LNP formed a panel for the low carbon programme led by DC. Still working through the Adaptations to Climate Change workshop from June 2019.
- **Natural Health**  
Workshop held in October 2019 on strengthening collaboration between environment and health sector for wellbeing. Natural Choices is part of social prescribing programme with 27 providers currently. A stage 2 bid is being submitted, if successful there will be £20,000 for the discovery phase and 3 years' worth of funding of £100,000 if we reach the final stage of the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives funding.
- **Influencing the BCP & Dorset Local Plans**  
Last Board meeting was back in March and in the process of updating the ecological network maps to feed into the evidence base. The CPS can contribute to the river data. Keen to link up with LA's and already starting to join up with BCP on the Stour Valley Park project.

Dorset LEP's Local Industrial Strategy is now online. <https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/local-industrial-strategy>

Possible future funding through the future prosperity fund.

### Discussion

- FB: opportunity map for rivers- could be used with the existing opportunity mapping, especially for Stage Zero projects.

**Action NP:** liaise with DERC on the river data needs.

## 6. Partners and chair update

### Dorset Wildlife Trust- AP

- New CEO has been confirmed as Brian Bleese
- 60% of staff currently furloughed.
- CaBA hosting funding notice has been received
- Dorset Wild Rivers is being put forward for funding from the WxW Partners Programme and a thank you to those who fed back on this.

- Beaver project on hold but many actions have been completed to date.

**Action AP:** Circulate note to partners on CaBA hosting funding for 2020.

#### **Wessex Rivers Trust – JB**

- Change of director to be announced mid-summer
- Have been attending Stour Valley Park meetings and looking at how the WRT can join up with the project- looking at wildlife benefits. NP encouraging all partners to act as ambassadors for the catchment partnership within projects like Stour Valley where we have been told there is 'no space' for us at the working group. LNP also involved in SVP- could the catchment partnership be used as a steering group.

**Action MC:** Send update from the Stour Valley Park project from the last meeting

#### **PHNMS- RB**

- The scheme has officially received funding
- Comms to be released shortly starting with a press release from the NFU shortly followed by a summary document compiled by the Catchment Partnership.
- PC to give an update at next meeting.

**Action ES:** Circulate PHNMS summary document when published

#### **Chair- FB**

- National Natural Capital Atlas now available, any feedback would be useful, especially where data sets are not as good as they could be. There is also a free webinar 25<sup>th</sup> June organised by the Ecosystems Knowledge Network- <https://ecosystemsknowledge.net/events/webinars>
- The last CaBA newsletter mentioned new data sets were available. A new Ecology and Fish Data Explorer has been launched on the [DEFRA Data Services Platform](https://environment.data.gov.uk/defra-data-services-platform), giving you access to view and download freshwater fish, invertebrate, macrophyte and diatom data through a user-friendly map interface: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/ecology-fish/>
- CaBA Agriculture WG has drafted a project proposal for a portal on agriculture information. FB circulated to key partners for response by 11<sup>th</sup> May
- Recent identification of Christchurch harbour's contribution to the failure of the Solent European Marine Site, producing 7000 TN/a (in comparison with the PH total input of 2000Tonnes TN/a), 3-5% of the Solent inputs. Doug Kite (NE) is also working on this. It would be useful to understand whether this creates a nitrate driver in the Stour, as well as the phosphate failure.
- National Trust's Beaver Project Officer also furloughed but the draft options appraisal and consultation summary have been circulated to the project group and the project is progressing.

**Action NP:** Pass on any suitable projects to SD relating to Poole Harbour N reduction

**Action FB/JW:** Obtain information on the Solent nutrient plan and SPD and its influence on the nitrate outputs from Christchurch harbour

## **7. AOB**

The Catchment Partnership team is currently looking at options to improve the website. This could mean moving away from the WxW hosted website due to difficulties in updating, branding etc. Hosting the website separately would mean updates could be done by the partnership but must be mindful of the additional maintenance.

## **Discussion**

- The LNP had a website designed locally.
- AP mentioned the benefits of social media and drawing more people to the website; agreed but need good quality website to drive traffic to.
- IR: would be useful to have the stats for the website- how many visits, what are people reading etc. Can the CP discuss needs & options with partners?
- RB: WxW PR is focused on the WxW messaging not that of the Catchment Partnership.
- The site may incur ARCGIS costs in addition to the hosting.

**Action MC:** Send on details for LNP web designer

**Action NP:** Research potential website alternatives from similar (and comparable) organisations; discuss with partners what the need is for online resources and how best it can be delivered. Research costs of potential websites from local suppliers (capital and on-costs).

## 7. AOB

**DONM:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, 10.00-12.30

DRAFT

| Who       | What   | Progress |
|-----------|--|----------|
| NP        | Circulate work plan and timeframes documents with minutes  | Complete |
| ES        | Circulate West Country Water Resource presentation sent from RB  | Complete |
| ES        | Update and circulate current projects list after CaBA deadline <b>29<sup>th</sup> May.</b>   |          |
| KC        | Ensure regular comms with the partnership (through NP) regarding WFD data and RBMP deadlines   |          |
| IW        | Obtain release date for EA Local Outcomes Plan for the Wessex region and send on a copy to NP  |          |
| KC        | Speak to flood teams within the EA to ascertain the best means of influencing flood project priorities which deliver multiple benefits.  |          |
| SD        | To update on new contact for the Nitrate CIL funds   |          |
| IW        | Feedback to EA on data sets from the monitoring programme that are missing information such as fish barriers-and enquire how data can be supplied by partners?   |          |
| AP        | Circulate note to partners on CaBA hosting funding 2020  |          |
| MC        | Send update from the Stour Valley Park project from the last meeting   |          |
| ES        | Circulate PHNMS leaflet when published   |          |
| ES        | Circulate link to Natural Capital Atlas webinar, 25 <sup>th</sup> June.  | Complete |
| NP        | Pass on any suitable projects to SD relating to Poole Harbour N reduction  |          |
| FB        | Respond to proposed CaBA Agriculture resources project proposal 11 <sup>th</sup> May   |          |
| FB/<br>JW | Obtain information on the Solent nutrient plan and SPD and its influence on the nitrate outputs from Christchurch harbour  |          |
| MC        | Send on details for LNP web designer   | Complete |
| NP        | Research potential website alternatives from similar (and comparable) organisations; discuss with partners what the need is for online resources and how best it can be delivered. Research costs of potential websites from local suppliers (capital and on-costs). |          |