

## River Derwent Catchment Partnership

### Minutes of Interim Steering Group (ISG) meeting – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016, Environment Agency Office, Coverdale House, York

**Attendees:** Steve Axford (Chair) - East Yorkshire Rivers Trust (SA)  
 Karen Saunders – River Derwent Catchment Partnership (KS)  
 Don Davies – Ryedale District Council (DD)  
 David Renwick – North York Moors National Park Authority (DR)  
 Jenny Craven – North York Moors National Park Authority (JC)  
 James Copeland – National Farmers Union (JCo)  
 Sarah Woolven – Natural England (SW)  
 Liz Bassindale – Howardian Hills AONB (LB)  
 Tim Burkinshaw – Scarborough Borough Council (TB)  
 Duncan Fyfe – Environment Agency (DF)  
 Mark Young – North Yorkshire County Council (MY)  
 Kevin Bayes – Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (KB)

**Apologies:** Petra Young – Forestry Commission  
 Jon Traill – Yorkshire Wildlife Trust  
 Jim Smith – Forestry Commission  
 Rosy Eaton – Natural England  
 Jeremy Pickles – East Riding of Yorkshire Council

#### Summary of Actions:

No.	Action	Who?
1	Send comments on specific questions in the Governance paper to KS by Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> March.	All
2	Update and amend the governance document/ToR to reflect points made in the meeting discussion, additional comments from the ISG and to include the other elements of the Partnership structure.	KS
3	Submit invoices for PFO work completed to date, to EYRT, as soon as possible and to ensure a further invoice is submitted by 31 March 2016.	KS
4	Work with Alan Mullinger (Secretary, EYRT) to ensure relevant paperwork is submitted before the deadline of 30 April 2016 to request the carryover of 15/16 CaBA hosting money.	DF/SA
5	Provide information to the ISG on any added value and third party contributions in kind the project has benefited from.	DF
6	Send KS any other suggestions for publicity/communications material to support the Partnership.	All
7	Develop a draft communications plan to support the Partnership.	KS
8	Include an item at the next ISG meeting on the HLF Rye Bid. KS to liaise with the project team.	KS/Rye Group
9	Arrange a presentation on 'Doing More for the Derwent' at a future ISG meeting.	DF
10	Send any additional updates to KS for circulation to the ISG	All
11	Circulate the latest version of the summary document to the ISG, with a deadline for comments, by exception, of Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> March.	KS/All
12	Discuss timing for next ISG meeting with contract sub-group and arrange date, via a Doodle Poll	KS

### 1. Welcome

SA welcomed people to the meeting and there was a round of introductions. Sarah Woolven (NE) and Kevin Bayes (YWT) were welcomed in place of Rosy Eaton and Jon Trill respectively.

### 2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

There was only one outstanding action. The ISG had asked for a budget report to be tabled at future meetings. KS has started to develop this, but there is further work to do.

**Matters Arising** – KS made the ISG aware that work had continued on the summary document, following the ISG discussion at the meeting in January. Jeremy Walker has also input and the document is now a two-side document – shorter, snappier and more inspiring. It is quite different to the version KS had circulated for comment immediately before the January ISG meeting, but a lot of the information from the earlier versions will be incorporated into other documents.

### 3. Partnership Board

KS updated the ISG with progress on recruitment to the Partnership Board. It was noted that Jeremy Walker has helped to move things forward, by agreeing a number of meetings with senior management within different organisations, within a very short period of time. Some meetings are still to be arranged, but initial responses from the organisations contacted so far have been positive.

There was some discussion on the draft Terms of Reference for the Partnership Board. KS reminded the group that the Board would also need to discuss and give final approval to the ToR, but it was important to get input from the ISG as part of that process, given their involvement over the last two years. KS also noted that the final governance document for the Partnership would include all the different elements of the Partnership Structure instead of having individual ToR for each group.

The following points were discussed, and agreed:

- **Period of Office for Chair/Vice-Chair** - Two years was considered an appropriate period for the Chair and Vice-Chair to be in position, with an expectation that when it was time for a Chair to stand down, the Vice-Chair would normally move into the role of Chair to help provide continuity and a smooth transition.
- **Secretariat Provision** – it was agreed that the Partnership Board should be given a specific responsibility to ensure that a Secretariat role is in place.
- **Role of the Partnership Board** – this section should be more prominent and moved nearer to the start of the document. Section 7.3 should also be moved to become the first bullet point in that section.

Many of the detailed questions were not considered during the meeting. KS asked ISG members to send comments in by the end of next week (Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March), so that they could be incorporated into an updated version. DR asked if anyone thought substantive points were missing. The only point that was highlighted is to incorporate a bit more information on the Derwent within the governance document, to make it clear what the ToR relate to and the over-arching Vision/Goals of the Partnership.

**ACTION:** All to send comments on specific questions in the Governance paper to KS by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March.

**ACTION:** KS to update and amend the governance document/ToR to reflect points made in the meeting discussion, additional comments from the ISG and to include the other elements of the Partnership structure.

#### **4. Catchment Partnership Budget**

DF and SA led a discussion the CaBA hosting money. As part of the discussion related to the contract of the Partnership Facilitation Officer, KS left the room for this part of the meeting.

The Group discussed the spend of the remaining CaBA host money and in particular the spend profile of the Partnership Facilitation Officer (PFO). DF read the email from the EA's Head Office confirming the deadline for the end of year statement reporting as 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Any money carried over must be spent by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. DF also explained that EA/Defra have not yet made any statement of intent re: future funding for catchment hosting.

There was also money to be carried over from last financial year (£5679) that was agreed in the Feb meeting would be spent on the PFO role, if possible. At present, the PFO is contracted to work c. 4 days per week until the end of April. DF asked if the Group would want to vary those hours and spread them out across further months to maintain partnership activity for a longer period of time. The group were also asked if they wanted to use the remaining CaBA host money to continue the role of the PFO.

After much discussion, the group were all in favour of continuing the role of the PFO for as long as possible, stretching hours where appropriate and using carried over money for continuation of that role and associated activities.

The group were virtually unanimous in wanting to ensure that the PFO concentrated on getting the foundations for the partnership right (terms of reference, establishing the board etc...) and in place before other activities such as looking for funding were considered. They saw value in investing in the structure of the partnership early on. They wanted to ensure a template was in place should future bids and work come along in the future.

The group also wanted to let KS know they all felt she was doing a very good job and helping us to make progress.

**ACTION:** KS to submit invoices for work completed to date, to EYRT, as soon as possible and to ensure a further invoice is submitted by 31 March 2016.

**ACTION:** SA/DF to work with Alan Mullinger (Secretary, EYRT) to ensure relevant paperwork is submitted before the deadline of 30 April 2016 to request the carryover of 15/16 CaBA hosting money.

#### **5. River Seph Project Update**

DF gave an update on the Catchment Partnership Action Fund project on the River Seph. The project has focussed on woody debris, fencing and buffer strips, starting with a demonstration day, run in Partnership with the Wild Trout Trust. The event focused on woody debris and how it can be used to provide bank protection rather than always removing logs and branches from watercourses. The project also involves water course fencing to reduce sediment input to the river. Due to the wet weather over the winter period, it has not been possible to access some of

the sites, which has delayed the project, but the CPAF money will be carried over to May 2016 to allow the project to finish.

No land owners have declined to take part in the project. The main reason for this is probably because 100% of funding and all labour/parts have been provided by the project. Some landowners have also provided in-kind contributions, which the ISG said should be recorded, as well as the potential financial benefits to landowners taking part in the project. MY asked if there was a plan to do any formal benefits analysis. This information would be helpful to encourage other landowners to take part in different locations. DF did not know if this was included in the scope of the project, but would find out, as it would be useful to do some form of evaluation of the project. DD asked if there was there monitoring of the river in place. DF advised that River Fly volunteers have offered to monitor 4-5 locations over the next year. They have had an initial training day to develop identification skills and DF keen to develop the monitoring for a longer period.

**ACTION:** DF to provide information to the ISG on any added value and third party contributions in kind the project has benefited from.

DR aid that he was hopeful that the River Rye project could help take some of the Seph approaches forward, but also expressed caution when looking at the funding models for future projects. Very few grants are 100% and DR would like to see some financial consistency in relation to grants given to landowners in future projects.

## **6. Catchment Partnership – Publicity**

SA led a brief discussion on publicity for the Partnership. We need to establish a draft plan for publicising the Partnership, which can then be considered/approved by the Board. Any plan will need to include messages focussed on different audiences. It was also noted that an internal communications plan is needed to ensure that all partners have a shared understanding of the Partnership and what we are trying to achieve.

It was agreed that future ISG meetings needed to include some more information and/or presentation on what was happening in other parts of the catchment such as the Middle and Lower Derwent to make sure there was a balance between the different parts of the catchment. If the Partnership has a presence at local shows such as the Ryedale Show, it was suggested that the Partnership will need to produce some publicity material rather than individual partners all bringing their own display stands etc.

JCo asked if we needed to do some publicity around what the group's about, but if so, it should also be used to convey the message of 'what's in it for you? You need to get involved.' The group also noted that in communications to the wider partnership, we need to be able to explain that things have been happening over the last 12-18months, at a slower pace than ideally we had wanted, but we are making progress. It was also agreed that a Case Study on the River Seph project and information on the Slowing the Flow Project, would also be good communications resources.

SA suggested that an Award ceremony could be something to consider as a way of promoting the Partnership, as well as encouraging/promoting the use of best practice within the catchment.

**ACTION:** ISG members to send KS any other suggestions for publicity/communications material to support the Partnership.

**ACTION:** KS to develop a draft communications plan to support the Partnership.

## 7. Updates from ISG members

**Rye HLF Bid** – DR gave an update. The project team are moving ahead with Rye bid. following a successful meeting with the HLF, the HLF have recommended that the bid should be for a Landscape Partnership Scheme, mainly because of some of the issues around land ownership. There is only one window per year to develop a Stage 1 application, and the bid needs to be in by June, which is very tight to get everything needed in place. The project team are meeting every 2 weeks to progress the application. The themes and overall vision have been agreed and outline projects discussed. It was agreed that it would be good to discuss the proposal in a bit more detail at the next ISG meeting both to familiarise the ISG with the detail of the project and to give the group to comment on the project and input their ideas and expertise. This would also help provide evidence to the HLF of local consultation which is needed as part of submitting applications to the HLF.

**ACTION:** Include an item at the next ISG meeting on the HLF Rye Bid. KS to liaise with the project team.

**Upper Derwent HLF bid** – DF gave a brief update; this is a companion HLF bid looking at similar issues to the Rye, but for the grant of up to £100k (Our Heritage). The bid is being led by EYRT, in partnership with FC. EYRT have had an initial discussion with the HLF who think it complements the Rye bid.

**National Park and Land Management Forum** – DR let the group know that the next meeting of the Forum is on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The focus of the meeting is on natural flood risk management to review different approaches/different techniques, including the Slowing the Flow project at Pickering to see how that approach could be extended – will also act as a form of engagement with local communities to support the HLF bid on the Rye.

**LEADER Programme** - DR gave quick update on new programme and priorities. Contract in place and is now open to calls. There are six calls in total, of which four are open now. Funding is for capital works, which will limit the type of bid that can be submitted. At this stage, there is probably not much of a read across into the aims/objectives of the Derwent Catchment Partnership. There is a launch event to publicise and explain the Programme which is being held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March in Hutton-the-Hole.

**CSF Facilitation Fund Event** – DR updated the ISG on the events the NYMNPA had held for farmers since the last ISG meeting, to explain the Facilitation Fund and gauge the level of interest in potential applications. There had been quite a lot of interest – enough for 2 applications, one focused on Westerdale and a larger one to cover the dales that drain into the Derwent (would complement the Rye). Further discussions are needed before applications are confirmed.

**River Basin Management Plans** – DF gave an update. The 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Plans have now been published and are available on the website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) There is a lot of detail in the plans, which DF could discuss at a future meeting, but the Humber River Basin Management Plan also includes one page setting out measures for the Derwent catchment.

**Humber River Basin Liaison Panel** – SA attended the last Liaison Panel meeting, which focussed on the bids for the environmental programme. It also included a presentation on the Upper Aire project and, in particular, how they have used volunteers. SA will circulate the slides when these are available.

**Integrated Catchment Solutions Project (NERC proposal)** - KS gave a brief updated on the project, which has submitted its proposal to NERC for just under £5 million in funding. The project is being led by Leeds, York and Sheffield University who have been looking for Partnership funding to support the application either as a financial, or in kind contribution. The project includes the whole of the greater Ouse catchment i.e. it includes the River Derwent Catchment, but from the initial Skype call, there was some concern that the project team did not seem to be aware of the Catchment Partnerships already in place, within the area, or of the CaBA. NFU were contacted late in the day to become a partner. It is unclear to what extent funding might be available for the Derwent Partnership, but the ISG agreed that it would be good to keep in touch and potentially ask the project team to give a presentation to the ISG, if they are successful in progressing to the next stage of the application process. They should find out by the end of April.

**Kirkham weir and sluices project** – KS gave a quick update on the second workshop for the Kirkham options appraisal project. This is part of the ‘Doing More for the Derwent’ project, which is being led by the EA to look at all the EA owned structures on the River Derwent. The focus of the meeting was to explore some of the pros/cons of the three main options under consideration in relation to the weir and sluices – improve, lower or remove. Ten different stakeholders were at the workshop, either as individuals or there to represent angling clubs or Parish Councils. KS noted that it was particularly interesting that many of the comments made did not relate to the structures, but to the general management of the river and adjoining land. As a result of this, KS gave the meeting attendees a brief overview of the RDCP and had a conversation after the meeting with one man who would be very keen to get involved doing river walkover surveys. The meeting reiterated to KS the passion and commitment that local people have for ‘their’ river and this led to a further discussion about the importance of communications and the need to identify the different messages that are relevant to different audiences – who are we pitching to? Farmers, urban communities, general public etc. We need to be clear about who the different groups are and what they are interested in/ what the messages are. DF asked the ISG if they would like a presentation on the ‘Doing More for the Derwent’ project, which is part of the overall SSSI Restoration Plan for the River Derwent. The group confirmed they would like a presentation.

**ACTION:** DF to arrange a presentation on ‘Doing More for the Derwent’ at a future ISG meeting.

**Humberhead Levels Partnership (HLP)** – KS gave a brief update on a meeting that KS and DF attended to tell members of the Humberhead Levels Partnership about the RDCP and to explore the potential for joint learning. At present, although there is some geographic overlap in the Lower Derwent Valley, much of the HLP activities are located further south, so there is no overlap/duplication of effort in the Lower Derwent. It was agreed that the RDCP and HLP would keep in touch as share information with the HLP as we decided our priority issues and/or areas to focus on.

As time was short, the updates ended at this point, but ISG members were asked to send KS any further updates that they would like included in the minutes for the meeting.

**ACTION:** send further updates to KS for circulation.

## **ADDITIONAL UPDATES RECEIVED POST-MEETING:**

### **Update on Catchment Sensitive Farming (Sarah Woolven, NE):**

- CSF currently preparing 5-year River Basin Strategies and catchment plans for the CSF phase 4 delivery period April 2016-2021.
- In 2015, we began to focus CSF delivery in line with the high priority water areas for the new Countryside Stewardship scheme. These areas reflect the priorities for water quality improvement; areas where there are multiple water quality priorities; and those where Countryside Stewardship can make the greatest contribution to the environment. We continue our work in 2016 in these high priority areas. All of the Derwent catchment is a high priority water area.
- CSF are moving to focused targeting of 'Priority Holdings'. A desk exercise has used evidence of water quality issues related to agriculture, risky enterprises/intensity of management and connectivity with water to individually rank holdings in terms of their risk. The highest scoring holdings represent the farms at highest risk of causing water pollution – CSF will focus most activities and support for CS at these farmers.
- CSF will proactively contact 'priority farms' over 5 years starting with farms with ELS expiring agreements. The aim is to engage with 60% of holdings in high water priority areas within WFD management catchments.
- Countryside Stewardship has been a good opportunity for CSF to engage more farms particularly arable farmers because we now have more to offer them using the wider range of land management options as well as capital items. There is a lot more available in CS than previous schemes with new items such as tramline disruptions and contracted wetlands and a range of land management options including arable reversion, riparian strips, winter cover crops and a range of SuDs options. Most of the water quality options are in mid-tier and are designed to go hand in hand with CSF advice so that they are used effectively.
- Natural England are running a series of Mid-Tier events to raise farmer awareness of CS, these are open to all interested in CS. Contact Tracy Harland for details.
- CSF advice visits by CSFO's, partners and contractors are available to support priority farmers in high water priority areas to apply suitable options for water via Water Capital Grants (stand-alone), Mid-tier 5-year agreements and Higher Tier.
- Contact CSFO to check which farms have Priority Holding status.

### **Update on Connecting for Nature (Tim Burkinshaw, Scarborough Borough Council):**

**Connecting for Nature** is the name of the legacy biodiversity partnership for Ryedale and Scarborough districts, which joined together following the expiry of their separate LBAPs, coming together with the Howardian Hills AONB. (The parts of the districts within the NYM National Park are covered by the Park's own Biodiversity Action Plan until 2017, so not explicitly included with Connecting for Nature).

Due to resource constraints, and consequently anticipating that local authority driven biodiversity action will remain at a low ebb, Connecting for Nature has focussed most of its energies into maintaining and building up a people-based network for disseminating news and projects across the area. The membership is open to any organisation or individual with an interest in the biodiversity of the area and our email contact list of

members currently numbers a little over 200. A website is live but still under development to act as a hub for information/ resources/ contacts/ inspiration [www.wordpress.com/connectingfornature](http://www.wordpress.com/connectingfornature) The hope is that local community groups will be able to initiate their own biodiversity projects, finding useful expert help and advice from others who have done similar things.

Several Social Media channels have also been set up to bring in a wider and more diverse range of stakeholders and supporters. A public **Facebook Group**, has 134 members and offers a forum for sharing news, events, discussions, seeking advice, volunteers etc. So far most members are relatively passive in as much as they don't post material themselves, though a good number comment or interact. Group Admins are the main contributors, but all members can post to the group. Tim Burkinshaw, Helen Percival (SBC) and Liz Bassindale (HH) are Admins; any new members need approving by one of them. It is hoped to develop the level of contributions from members so that much biodiversity work, projects, ideas, inspiration is shared with a momentum of its own.

[www.facebook.com/groups/connectingfornature](http://www.facebook.com/groups/connectingfornature)

The **Twitter account** for the biodiversity partnership is @CFNature [www.twitter.com/CFNature](http://www.twitter.com/CFNature) This has a much wider reach and is followed by people from further afield as well as Yorkshire. 165 followers so far, not all the same people as the FB group.

A new **Instagram account** has just been set up as this will have a different audience again...it is best for beautiful images, so will only post about one good photo per week. Lends itself to hashtags, improving chances of finding new supporters searching for nature content or local place name tags [www.instagram.com/connectingfornature](http://www.instagram.com/connectingfornature)

We are also developing our use of wordpress (blog) and mailchimp for sending out large email campaigns. If anyone wants more information on these or to learn from their experience please contact Tim direct.

## 8. AOB and Date of Next Meeting

**Sign-off of the summary document** – KS asked the ISG to agree the sign-off process for the summary document, particularly since the latest version was significantly different to the last version ISG members had seen. It was agreed that KS would re-circulate for comments, by exception, with a deadline of Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March, to allow Jeremy Walker to use the final version in meetings from Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March onwards.

**ACTION:** KS to circulate the latest version of the summary document to the ISG, with a deadline for comments, by exception, of Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March.

**Date of Next Meeting** – it was agreed that KS should discuss this with the contract sub-group before canvassing for availability.

**ACTION:** KS to discuss timing for the next ISG meeting with the contract sub-group and arrange date, via a Doodle poll.

Karen Saunders (Partnership Facilitation Officer)  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2016