

## River Derwent Catchment Partnership

### Minutes of Interim Steering Group (ISG) meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016, North York Moors National Park Authority, Helmsley

<b>Attendees:</b>	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 – Natural England	(JC)
	James Copeland – National Farmers Union	(JCo)
	Rosy Eaton – Natural England	(RE)
	Liz Bassindale – Howardian Hills AONB	(LB)
	Tim Burkinshaw – Scarborough Borough Council	(TB)
	Mark Young – North Yorkshire County Council	(MY)
	Kevin Bayes – Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	(KB)
	Annabel Hanson – East and North Yorkshire Waterways Partnership	(AH)
	Ian Cowx – East Yorkshire Rivers Trust	(IC)
	Jeremy Walker – Independent	(JW)
	Andrew Stephenson – National Farmers Union	(AS)
	Mark Reid – Environment Agency	(MR)

<b>Apologies:</b>	Petra Young – Forestry Commission
	Duncan Fyfe – Environment Agency
	Jon Traill – Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
	Jim Smith – Forestry Commission
	Jeremy Pickles – East Riding of Yorkshire Council
	Rachel Pickering – North York Moors National Park Authority

#### Summary of Actions:

No.	Action	Who?
1	KS to ask DF to establish latest position on funding from Defra and when Catchment Hosts may be informed of their decision.	KS/DF
2	ISG members to send any additional thoughts on resourcing the Partnership to KS by Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> May.	All
3	KS to work with the contract sub-group to draft a paper on options/ recommendations for resourcing the ongoing co-ordination of the Partnership.	KS/Sub-group
4	KS to use outputs from the workshop session to identify and scope out potential future projects for the Partnership.	KS
5	KS to circulate the slides from the presentation on Doing More for the Derwent.	KS
6	ISG members to find out what information their websites include on INNS and where possible include some text/link to PlantTracker to help improve the reporting/mapping of INNS within the Derwent catchment.	All
7	KS to draft some text/send the link to ISG members for them to include information on their websites/link to PlantTracker.	KS
8	ISG members to make colleagues aware of the risk and need to adopt a rigorous Check, Clean, Dry protocol when working in or near any watercourse, but particularly if they are working on or near the River Ure.	All
9	KS to liaise with Alan Mullinger (EYRT) and the ISG to agree how we could include the Catchment Partnership at the Ryedale Show.	KS/All
10	KS to discuss timing for the next ISG meeting with the 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. Annabel Hanson (East and North Yorkshire Waterways Partnership/East Riding of Yorkshire Council) and Kevin Bayes (YWT) were welcomed in place of Jim Smith and Jon Traill respectively. Jeremy Walker, Prof. Ian Cowx (EYRT), Mark Reid (EA) and Andrew Stephenson (NFU) also joined the meeting.

## 2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

There were three outstanding actions from the last meeting:

- i) DF to provide ISG with information on added value and third party contributions for the River Seph project. DF is awaiting information from the Project Officer.
- ii) All to send KS suggestions for publicity/communications material
- iii) KS to develop a draft communications plan. This action is on hold. The Partnership needs to develop a communications plan, but this is not considered a high priority for the Officer contract at the moment.

**Matters Arising** – There were no matters arising raised by ISG members.

## 3. Derwent Catchment Partnership

KS went through the points raised in the update paper, circulated prior to the meeting:

- i) **Funding for catchment hosting** – although EYRT received funding for partnership hosting activities in 15/16, there has been no official confirmation that funding will be made available in 16/17. Initial advice from Defra had been encouraging, but IC mentioned that he was in a meeting with Defra last week and that the position was still very uncertain. DR said it would be an issue if the Partnership was unable to resource an Officer role following the end of the existing contract in June 2016. SA also advised that even if additional funding was forthcoming further discussion would be needed on how any money would be allocated. Defra also set limits on the percentage of the grant (currently 70%) that could be used to pay for sub-contractors. It was agreed that if we can make the case for the Partnership, funding will follow. We should remain optimistic, but should not rely on the continuation of hosting money.

**ACTION:** KS to ask DF to establish latest position on funding from Defra and when Catchment Hosts may be informed of their decision.

- ii) **Application to carry over 15/16 CaBA hosting money for 16/17** – KS confirmed that EYRT had applied to carry over some money from last year's grant for catchment hosting into 16/17. EYRT are still waiting for approval for this from EA/Defra.
- iii) **Membership of Partnership Board and governance** – JW gave the group a bit of background on his role/experience, including his most recent role as Chair of Slowing

the Flow, a project based around Pickering. He reminded the group that following discussion at the January ISG meeting, the ISG had asked MY and DR to see if he would help establish a Board for the Derwent Catchment Partnership. Since then, he has spoken with several different organisations to gauge their interest in being represented on the Board. In general people had responded positively to the set of ideas presented in the summary paper and the Partnership's focus on delivering multiple objectives. Work was ongoing to explore potential local funding sources and JW was also keen to build a case to Government for some central funding. He had hoped that the Derwent might be chosen as a pilot project under Oliver Letwin's National Flood Resilience Review, but that this looks unlikely at the moment. The date for the first meeting was likely to be in July. It will be important to help members get a good understanding of the Partnership's objectives and to discuss/agree governance arrangements in order to give confidence to Partners and any potential funders. MY thanked JW on behalf of the group for his work in helping to establish the Board and noted, in particular, the senior-level buy in to the group that exceeded the group's initial expectations. This was supported by the ISG.

DR asked for a sense of the conversations that had taken place with prospective members. JW advised that people had found the intention to deliver multiple objectives and potential for delivering win/win projects interesting, while recognising there will also be conflicting objectives that the Partnership will need to work through. There was some concern that the governance arrangements may be overly bureaucratic, the Board was potentially too big, securing funding would be a challenge and that managing the tie up between top down and bottom up approaches would also be difficult. There was also a sense that it would be very important to make sure any suite of projects also includes small-scale actions that make sense to local people.

- iv) **Resourcing the Partnership going forward** – ISG members were asked to give their initial thoughts on resourcing the ongoing co-ordination of the Partnership going forward both if funding was secured and in the absence of any central money being available to pay for an Officer role. DR stated that, as a minimum, he thought it was important to have a post that worked for the Partnership and could be objective/independent of any single organisation. This would be a resource that Partners may need to invest some funding in, but the cost could potentially be topped up from others sources. The role could co-ordinate the partnership activities, but with the support of Partnership members could also help scope out and plan project activities. It was noted that securing funding to pay for officer costs linked to delivering individual projects was generally easier than getting funding to pay for core costs.

DR also noted that the Partnership needed to give more thought to what projects would be badged as Partnership projects vs Partner projects going forward. This is particularly important if the Partnership goes forward as a non-constituted body, as currently planned, since projects would always need to be have a lead organisation in order to apply for funding. DR commented that where relevant, staff from NYMNPA might be able to help scope out projects and/or help with funding bids as their

Funding Officer was doing at the moment on the Rye HLF bid and this might be something that other partner organisations could offer as a form of in-kind support of the Partnership. It was agreed that the initial priority was for the ISG to decide on the type of resource needed. How that resource was contracted eg. Full vs part-time; employee vs contractor and one vs more posts was a secondary point.

The ISG agreed that KS should scope out an options/recommendations paper, with support from the contract sub-group. and that the Partnership should work on the assumption that any additional funding from Defra to pay for part of an Officer role is a bonus, rather than a central part of the funding requirement. If partner organisations are going to invest in a resource, we need to be able to make a strong case, based on the scale and aspirations of the Derwent Catchment Partnership to help build trust and set out why organisations should invest some of their budget in the Partnership.

**ACTION:** ISG members to send any additional thoughts on resourcing the Partnership to KS by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May.

**ACTION:** KS to work with the contract sub-group to draft a paper on options/recommendations for resourcing the ongoing co-ordination of the Partnership.

#### 4. Derwent Priorities

KS led a workshop session to identify potential actions/projects that would help to deliver three of the priority goals for the River Derwent Catchment Partnership:

- i) Education and Engagement
- ii) Habitats and Species
- iii) Improvements in Water Quality

The ISG split into three groups and worked back from a time in the future (2027) assuming that the Partnership had delivered the goal under consideration and identified the actions that they think would have been needed, people involved, potential barriers they overcame etc in order to deliver the goal. The results of the discussion will be used to scope out/plan projects that, subject to funding being secured, the Partnership could deliver.

The group exercise was followed by a brief plenary discussion to gather initial views from the ISG on how/where to focus our activities. There was a general sense that we need to present an overall vision/picture of what the Partnership wants to deliver in the catchment as a whole and use it as a communications tool. By explaining the whole picture to people and running smaller events with local communities in other parts of the catchment, this would help build engagement and reduce the risk of people losing interest if they thought that the Partnership was not going to consider the particular stretch of river/location of most interest to them as an immediate area to focus on.

**ACTION:** KS to use outputs from the workshop session to identify and scope out potential future projects for the Partnership.

## 5. Doing More for the Derwent

Mark Reid (EA) gave a presentation (slides circulated separately) to the ISG on the project 'Doing More for the Derwent' which is being led by the Environment Agency/Natural England. The project originated from the results of the Derwent SSSI Restoration Plan, completed for EA/NE by Royal Haskoning in 2010. EYRT is implementing the actions required for each of the 22 river reaches, except for those areas where EA in-river structures are involved. These are being considered as part of a separate EA project.

The project started four years ago and since then most of the focus has been on the middle and lower reaches of the SSSI. To date, 18 km of the river has been signed off by Natural England and an additional 7km are due for sign-off shortly relating to Howe Beck and Kexby Beck. Of the remaining length, 12.5km involves EA structures, which will take longer to investigate/decide appropriate actions. This leaves about 6km to be looked at in 2017/18.

The EA structures under consideration are located at Barmby, Elvington, Stamford Bridge, Buttercrambe, Howsham and Kirkham. MR updated the ISG on the latest position in relation to Kirkham weir/sluices and Howsham weir. Following the trial lowering of the water level at Kirkham in 2014, the EA has undertaken further investigations and discussions with local stakeholders. From a long list of options, they have reduced this to two (lowering or removal) which will be explored in more detail in 2016 and discussions with local stakeholders will continue. At Howsham, the Renewable Heritage Trust is planning to install a second hydropower turbine in 16/17 along with improved measures for fish passage.

MR also gave an update on work that has started to look at the issues in the Lower Derwent Valley. Some work with stakeholders has also started to try and understand/explore the issues and a group from Surrey University are helping with this by trying to develop a mathematical model that shows the links between the different functions of the river and influences on the river. It is a very complex model, which currently presents information in a counter-intuitive way, so careful thought will need to be given before outputs are shared more widely, as they could easily be misinterpreted.

JCo commented that the complexity of the Lower Derwent was really important to remember and that throughout the catchment, there will be priorities that compete. For example, actions that may be beneficial for habitat creation or flood risk management could have significant impacts on farmers' businesses or significant abstractors, such as Yorkshire Water. Any work/decisions needs to make sure the connectivity between the upper part of the catchment and lower sections is considered properly to make sure that they either work together or appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place. The NFU are due to meet with the EA to discuss the model for the Lower Derwent Valley and JCo said that it was good to have the conversations in order to understand the different perspectives.

IC, KS and KB had all attended the workshops with Surrey University and reinforced the complexity of what they were trying to model as well as the need for careful thought in terms of how any outputs are communicated, particularly with the wider public.

**ACTION:** KS to circulate the slides from the presentation on Doing More for the Derwent.

## 6. Partnership Updates

**Rye HLF Bid** – RE gave an update on the HLF bid for the Rye sub-catchment. The deadline for the application is 1 June and the bid is for around £1.5 million over a four-year period. The project would include work to strengthen habitat connectivity in the area, conserve priority species, improve water quality, understand and safeguard historic features and promote public access and engagement. If successful at this stage, there would be an eighteen-month development period up to 2018 before a second decision on funding was taken. This would mean that the main delivery phase for the project would not start until 2019, but the development phase would include a lot of in-depth research and data gathering. NYMNPA are the lead organisation for the bid and Tom Stephenson, Funding Officer for NYMNPA along with the project team, which includes many of the ISG organisations are working extremely hard to finalise the bid. DR showed ISG members a map of the project area under consideration. As the area extends beyond the boundary of the NYMNPA, they are seeking the written support of Ryedale District Council and North Yorkshire County Council before submitting the application. NYCC have confirmed support and DR is waiting for feedback from RDC.

TB asked how they were approaching the issue of describing the area as a unit as that was often a challenge for Landscape Partnerships. RE explained that this had been the subject of many discussions. Initially, the project team were considering limiting the project area to c 500m either side of the watercourses in the Rye catchment, but this would have made it challenging to meet the area requirement for submitting a bid of 200 square km. The project thinks that there is a better case if it focusses on the River Rye and River Riccall. There are enough similarities in terms of habitats and functional connections to make a case for that area to be considered. The HLF is very interested in landscape function and the links between upland and lowland areas in terms of issues such as sediment, water quality and species migration. The application also needs to find the right balance between function and character of the landscape as the HLF guidance still includes a strong emphasis on character. Where appropriate, the bid will also include natural flood risk management, but this is not a primary interest to HLF and there was a suggestion from the ISG that it may be simpler to remove any those elements from the project and pursue them via other projects/funding sources. KB also noted that a standard HLF question will be to ask about the level of match funding available for the project. DR advised that the EA and National Park were going to contribute and there were ongoing discussions with other partners about potential match-funding.

**Upper Derwent HLF bid** – KS gave a brief update; following initial discussions with the HLF, John Shannon (EYRT) has been having meetings with potential partners to identify a set of proposals that could form a bid to the HLF for a grant under the 'Our Heritage' Scheme.

**LEP Bid Submission** - KS gave an update on the application to the York, East and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. An application was submitted on behalf of the Catchment Partnership by North Yorkshire County Council in April 2016 for funding for a two-year period. We have not had feedback on the application yet, but the next step will be

to meet with LEP officers to discuss the bid in more detail and in particular how the funding would be used.

**River Seph Catchment Partnership Action Fund Project** – (Update provided following the meeting) – the River Seph project is nearing completion and EYRT are producing a final report at the moment. Following delays over the winter as a result of the heavy rain, work has continued with eight landowners across the catchment (Raisdale Bilsdale beck down to below the confluence of the Rye / Seph). Actions have included fencing along approximately 2.2 miles in five different locations, equivalent to 20% of the river length identified in the original report by the Wild Trout Trust. Erosion sites have been addressed at three locations and work is currently underway at Laskill Bridge to improve a stock crossing point on the river, reducing sediment input to the river.

**Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum** – TB mentioned that he had attended a YWT workshop in April on INNS. YWT lead on the Yorkshire Invasive Species Forum. To date, this has focussed on the areas of West and South Yorkshire, but it is possible that it may be extended to cover the whole of the Yorkshire Region. At the workshop, an app for reporting sightings on INNS was mentioned <http://www.plantracker.org.uk/> The app was originally developed by a group of organisations including the Environment Agency and Natural England. TB and KS have both downloaded the app to mobile phones and it is easy to use. TB suggested that where possible, if member organisations did not already have some information on INNS and a link to the app on their organisation's website, if they were able to include a link to the PlantTracker app this would be a simple way of helping to spread the word and collecting data of sightings in one location. The app logs the GPS location of sightings as well as size of area affected, if it's been/is being treated and users can submit a photo. The photo is then used to verify that the plant/animal has been correctly identified before it is uploaded to the site. Any data collected is also imported to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN).

**ACTION:** ISG members to find out what information their websites include on INNS and where possible include some text/link to PlantTracker to help improve the reporting/mapping of INNS within the Derwent catchment.

**ACTION:** KS to draft some text/send the link to ISG members for them to include information on their websites/link to PlantTracker.

**Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer** – RE gave an update. Following the retirement of the previous CSF Officer, NE have been unsuccessful in finding a replacement. NE have therefore extended the work area of the CSF Officer for the Esk Catchment, Jonathan Payne. He won't be taking on responsibility for the whole of the Derwent, but will focus on the Rye and Upper Derwent sub-catchments.

**CSF Facilitation Fund Event** – DR updated the ISG on the Facilitation Fund applications. A group of farmers in the Derwent Dales have submitted an application and appointed Karen Stanley to be the Facilitator. The farmers want to focus on a range of activities, many of which are compatible with the aims of the Derwent Catchment Partnership such as improving water quality and riparian habitats. A decision on the application is imminent.

## 7. AOB and Date of Next Meeting

**Demon Shrimp** – KS passed on some information from the Environment Agency. The Demon Shrimp has been found on the River Ure at two locations – one near Boroughbridge and also in Ripon Marina. The spread of this species is concerning as it has the potential to impact aquatic invertebrate populations and unfortunately it is resistant to disinfectant. The only action therefore is to help prevent its spread by using biosecurity measures. Anyone working in or near rivers should make sure they use the Check, Clean, Dry protocol.

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/checkcleandry/>

**ACTION:** ISG members to make colleagues aware of the risk and need to adopt a rigorous Check, Clean, Dry protocol when working in or near any watercourse, but particularly if they are working on or near the River Ure.

**Agricultural Shows** – SA said that EYRT have a stand at the Pickering Game Fair (21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May) and the Ryedale Show (26<sup>th</sup> July) and there is space for a Partnership presence as EYRT now have a larger tent to use for such events. Howardian Hills AONB and NYMNPA confirmed that they both have a stand at the Ryedale Show. SA asked that they keep in touch with KS who will also work with Alan Mullinger at EYRT to agree how we can represent the Partnership at the Ryedale Show.

**ACTION:** KS to liaise with Alan Mullinger (EYRT) and the ISG to agree how we could include the Catchment Partnership at the Ryedale Show.

**Partnership Names** - KS drew the attention of the ISG to a flip chart which showed the different names that people had suggested if it was decided that we wanted to change the name for the Partnership from its current name of River Derwent Catchment Partnership. Although it is not essential to change the name, if the group wanted to do that, then this is the right time to do it, as the Partnership is formally established with its Board and Delivery Group. ISG members were asked to have a quick look at the suggestions and note their like/dislike for each name and/or suggest alternatives. KS will send out a follow-up email, but from an initial review of the comments, there appears to be a preference to include the name Yorkshire in the title as there are several rivers with the name Derwent. 'Yorkshire Derwent Partnership' received the most positive responses. There was a clear preference to drop the word 'catchment' from the name and there was also a suggestion of a new name "Derwent Futures."

**ACTION:** KS to email ISG members a summary of the comments on names, with a request for any additional comments/thoughts.

**Date of Next Meeting** – based on the current meeting frequency of approximately every two months, the next ISG meeting would take place in July. Although this is beyond the end date of the current contract for the Partnership Facilitation Officer, KS suggested that it was worth setting a date to help maintain momentum.

**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)**

**19<sup>th</sup> May 2016**