

River Derwent Catchment Partnership

Minutes of Interim Steering Group (ISG) meeting – 27th January 2016, Dalby Visitor Centre

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)
	Rosy Eaton – Natural England	(RE)
	Petra Young – Forestry Commission	(PY)
	Liz Bassindale – Howardian Hills AONB	(LB)
	Tim Burkinshaw – Scarborough Borough Council	(TB)
	Duncan Fyfe – Environment Agency	(DF)
	Mark Young – North Yorkshire County Council	(MY)
	Jeremy Pickles – East Riding of Yorkshire Council	(JP)
	Jim Smith – Forestry Commission	(JS)
	Jon Traill – Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	(JT)

Summary of Actions:

No.	Action	Who?
1	Provide an update to ISG members following the Kirkham weir meeting	KS
2	If ISG members are interested in keeping up to date on the LEADER programmes, they should join their Local Action Group (LAG).	All
3	RE to investigate what they are proposing to do in the Humberhead Levels.	RE
4	JS to send DR some text about the Woodlands for Water scheme.	JS
5	DR to give text from JS on Woodlands for Water to the contractors running the workshops and ask them to publicise it.	DR
6	TB/RE to discuss potential for joining up to include an additional wet grassland site	TB/RE
7	KS to include appropriate wording in the summary document and covering letter	KS
8	DR to speak to Jeremy Walker about joining the Board for the Derwent Partnership.	DR
9	KS to circulate the list of potential organisations for the Board to ISG members for comment.	KS
10	KS to confirm amount of money to be spent by the end of March and source of the additional £11,500	KS
11	KS to ensure that a budget report is tabled at future meetings.	KS
12	ISG members to send any additional comments on the funding paper to DF as soon as possible.	All
13	KS to review existing commitments to see if there is potential to increase hours from now until the end of March.	KS
14	DF/SA to explore potential for carrying over part of the 15/16 hosting money	DF/SA
15	DF to give a Seph presentation to the March ISG meeting.	DF
16	Arrange date for next ISG Meeting (March)	KS

1. Welcome and Introductions

SA welcomed people to the meeting and there was a round of introductions.

2. Updates from Partnership Facilitation Officer and ISG members

KS gave a brief update on progress to date. Contract started in mid-November and there is still a lot to do. Most time has been spent on bringing the CaBA and EYRT websites up to date (still more to do on EYRT), working on the summary document/governance structure, speaking to ISG members/other stakeholders and researching potential funding sources. KS will be attending a meeting to discuss the options appraisal for Kirkham Weir on 28th January and will report back to the ISG.

ACTION: KS to provide an update to ISG members following the Kirkham weir meeting.

SA then invited updates from other ISG members:

Rye HLF bid – HLF staff had been out on site on 26th January, with members of the ISG involved in the Rye project. DR is waiting for the formal feedback to the Enquiry Form, but the visit was positive and the expectation is that HLF may recommend that the project is submitted as a Landscape Partnership Scheme. This wouldn't involve applying for more money, but the application would need to be submitted at a particular time (June), but would make it easier to work with, and involve landowners.

North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Programme - the contract documents for the next LEADER programme are about to be signed for the North York Moors, Coasts and Hills LEADER. Calls for bids are likely to be launched next week/early February, with six priority areas including farm productivity, rural tourism, forestry productivity and rural services. Grants are primarily for capital expenditure; there is very little scope for revenue money.

ACTION: If ISG members are interested in keeping up to date on the LEADER programmes, they should join their Local Action Group (LAG).

CSF Facilitation Fund - NYMNP are holding three workshops for farmers w/c 1st February to raise awareness of the Facilitation Fund among farmers and to establish whether there is sufficient interest in applying. The deadline for applications is 18th March, but projects need to involve at least 200 ha. RE mentioned that the Humberhead Levels is also interested in the Fund.

ACTION: RE to investigate what they are proposing to do in the Humberhead Levels.

Costa Beck – JT mentioned that the IDB for Pickering is in discussions with the EA about a potential Public Sector Service Agreement on Costa Beck.

Wheldrake Ings Nature Reserve – YWT are also bidding for a small grant c£2k to support some work on the SSSI.

Woodlands for Water – JS gave an update on the Woodlands For Water grant scheme. Applications are open until the end of March 2016 and it is expected that publicity will start in the next couple of weeks following approval of leaflets etc. The scheme is open to farmers wishing to plant woodland and applicants will be supported with the application process. The

Rye and Seph are likely to be priority areas, but this is subject to Defra approval. JS asked if there would be an opportunity to use the NYMNP authority workshops to promote the scheme.

ACTION: JS to send DR some text about the Woodlands for Water scheme.

ACTION: DR to give text from JS on Woodlands for Water to the contractors running the workshops and ask them to publicise it.

Doing More for the Derwent – DF gave a brief update. The EA have appointed consultants to undertake some options appraisal work for Kirkham weir, which is one of five EA structures being investigated on the Derwent. Three meetings are to be held before the end of March. The first one, which KS is attending will be held on 28th January 2016. Work is also ongoing in relation to the other structures:

Howsham - technically difficult site as there's a need to balance different requirements such as hydropower generation, canoeing and fish migration;

Buttercrambe – EA is putting lamprey tiles on the weir;

Stamford Bridge – replacing structures on the bypass channel. Looking to install a lamprey pass in the short-term;

Elvington – the EA National Service (ncpms) is looking at different options of fish pass;

Barmby – the EA is currently doing a lamprey trial to see if lamprey are getting through the gates when the barrage is open for a few hours each day. Results so far are promising. The Derwent Restoration Project forms part of this project, but no update was available for this meeting.

CaBA Funding – Money for CaBA hosting is due to end in March 2016. Discussions with Defra by the EA and National CaBA Support Group are continuing regarding the possibility of further funding for 2016/17.

North Yorkshire County Council flood risk management – Flood Risk Management is high on the political agenda as a result of the recent flooding. NYCC has money for doing some catchment assessment for flood risk, starting in the Rye catchment. They are also aware that East Riding of Yorkshire Council are doing a similar exercise in the Lower Derwent and will need to look upstream, as part of their assessment. They are therefore in discussions as it's recognised that it would be good if the methodologies were consistent, so there are benefits to joining up the work.

Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project – External funding for this project ended in 2013. TB has maintained a social media presence for the project, but his role is likely to change soon. As a result, the advocacy work that he had been doing in the upper reaches of the catchment and in the Ryedale area has stopped. TB also mentioned that the first of 11 HLS Schemes is coming up for renewal over the next year. It's uncertain whether they will be renewed. TB is also keen to explore ways of securing some funding to allow work to continue with farmers for 1-2 days per week.

Yorkshire's Hidden Vale – TB confirmed that this project is 'moth-balled'. He thinks there is still the potential for a landscape bid, but there is no momentum behind it and he doesn't have the capacity to progress it. However, he did note that some of the individual projects that made up the overall bid could potentially still be progressed.

Lower Derwent Valley – Natural England have submitted a small HLF bid for improvements to habitats and access on specific sites.

Habitat Improvement Programme – RE mentioned that there is a National Programme within Natural England that that is looking to submit an HLF bid for improvements to sand dune and wet grassland habitats. Natural England are looking at a long list of sites now, with a view to selecting 7-8. These could include sites in the Lower Derwent and Humberhead Levels. ISG members queried whether it might be possible for TB's project on wet grassland to be added to the list. RE thought that this might be possible, but that the priority was potentially on designated sites rather than the habitat. DR commented that it's important to look at the habitat rather than whether a site is designated or not.

ACTION: TB/RE to discuss potential for joining up to include an additional wet grassland site.

Focus areas - Natural England are in the process of developing a new approach to integrate the work areas across the different function of Natural England within specific areas of the Region in order to focus on landscape scale activities. The Derwent catchment is one focus area, along with the North York Moors and the whole of the coast.

3. Summary Document/Governance

KS thanked ISG members and contract sub-group for their comments on drafts to date. An updated version was circulated before the meeting, but needs revising, once outstanding substantive points have been discussed/agreed with the sub-group. KS raised a couple of specific points with the ISG including whether there should be a specific reference to a period of office for Board members included in the summary/covering letter. Following discussion by the group, it was agreed that a set period should not be prescribed, but that the document could include a form of words that made it clear that the expectation was for a period of x years, but that there was flexibility and the Board could review this on an annual basis.

ACTION: KS to include appropriate wording in the summary document and covering letter.

KS then referred to the covering paper on governance and the question of whether the group should be called a Partnership/Network or something else was discussed. No decision was taken as it was agreed that this would be something for the Board to decide, but there was some initial discussion of different views, primarily around clarifying whether the group was simply a group for co-ordinating activities and sharing knowledge/experience in which case the term 'Network' might be more appropriate or whether the ambition of the group was greater, as suggested by the Icarus work in which case Partnership may be better. The Derwent is a complex, large and diverse catchment, so there is the potential to have greater ambition than just acting as a co-ordinating group. We need to set out the USP for the Derwent Catchment Partnership eg. The top three things we'll do at the strategic scale that can't be delivered at the small scale.

In either case (Partnership or Network), it was agreed that there could still be a Board in place to give strategic direction, but it was noted that if the group was just a co-ordination group, this may not warrant a Board. DR commented that this decision would need to be taken by the Board, but it was also noted that the ISG should be in a position to make recommendations to the Board based on the work that had been done to date and the group's aspirations for the Board to then approve or amend, as there will be several points

that the Board will need to review/decide as part of establishing a formal Board for the Partnership. JT also noted that if hosting money wasn't available for 16/17, there was a risk that the Partnership would founder and each organisation would need to consider internally what their level of commitment to the Partnership going forward might be.

The group asked for an update on progress with recruiting to the Board. KS gave an update on the long list of potential members that the ISG had initially considered. Some of these represent a small area of the catchment and may not wish to be on the Board and it was agreed that just because an organisation was on the ISG, it did not mean that it should automatically be on the Board. KS asked if the ISG wanted to wait to appoint the Board when a list/names had been finalised or start by appointing a few members and then involve the Board in recruiting remaining members. It was agreed that the latter approach should be taken and the key priority was to start getting people in place. MY and DR have both had informal discussions with Jeremy Walker about potentially taking on the role of Chair for the Board. He is an ex Environment Agency Board member, but has wide-ranging environmental interests and a large network of contacts. Some ISG members said that as they did not know him, they were unable to comment on his suitability, but would go with the views of those that did know him. DR is going to see him at another meeting on 28th January and it was agreed that he would have a further discussion with him.

JP asked how much 'power' the Board would have and cautioned against having too strong a representation of flood risk management interests on the Board, given the much wider range of goals that the Partnership had developed during the Icarus project. Organisations with similar interests may also need to trust others to represent their interests on the Board for example in relation to flood risk management and members of the Defra family. RE noted that within Natural England, there was support for referring to the group as a Network to recognise the strength that it has in co-ordinating and joining things up. Overall, the ISG agreed that the final decision on whether to call it a Partnership or Network should be made by the Board, once it is in place, but to keep in mind the work done by Icarus on the Structure [*Note: the Icarus project did not explicitly consider the name for the group. It continued referring to the Partnership, as set out in the Project Brief*].

ACTION: DR to speak to Jeremy Walker about joining the Board for the Derwent Partnership
ACTION: KS to circulate the list of potential organisations for the Board to ISG members for comment.

4. Funding: Options for spending budget carried over from 14/15

KS introduced the item. There is £5649 of CaBA money that needs to be spent by the end of March 2016. In addition to this, there may be a sum of about £11,500, which also needs spending by the end of March. KS is looking into the source of the money to confirm the exact figure. DF then presented a paper, outlining potential options for spending the £5649, which was the amount declared to CaBA for carry over from 14/15. Options include buying electro-fishing equipment; monitoring equipment (either for water quality or invertebrate monitoring); a physical model of the catchment; extending the funding to continue paying for a Partnership Facilitation Officer role and attending local events such as the Ryedale and Malton shows.

During the discussion, there was overall support for continuing to fund the RDCP Officer role and using some of the carry over money to pay for the current contract. SA and DF would

need to explore the potential for carrying over some of the 15/16 CaBA hosting money into 16/17. KS also noted that the Officer contract is until the end of April, but if the 15/16 hosting money needs to be spent by the end of March, this may not be possible, unless there is scope to carry over. There was also some support for monitoring equipment and/or attending agricultural shows. Monitoring equipment would be a good way of engaging other volunteers in the catchment, but we would need to be careful about what equipment was bought to avoid ongoing maintenance costs and be very clear about where the data gaps were that needed filling. Attending agricultural shows as a way of engaging with the general public and promoting the draft vision and goals of the Partnership was also seen as positive. Depending on the final sum of money available, the order of priorities was agreed as 1) funding the officer role, with a view to KS increasing her hours as much as possible until the end of March; 2) monitoring equipment; 3) attending shows.

DR also requested that a budget paper was brought to future meetings. This was agreed by the ISG. KS is in the process of collating information on contributions to date from the different organisations involved in the Partnership and will bring a paper to the next meeting in March to summarise the position.

ACTION: KS to confirm amount of money to be spent by the end of March and source of the additional £11,500.

ACTION: KS to ensure that a budget report is tabled at future meetings.

ACTION: ISG members to send any additional comments on the funding paper to DF as soon as possible.

ACTION: KS to review existing commitments to see if there is potential to increase hours from now until the end of March.

ACTION: DF/SA to explore potential for carrying over part of the 15/16 hosting money.

5. Workshop Session: Priorities for the Partnership

KS introduced the session. As a result of the Icarus work in 2015, the RDCP has a draft vision and set of draft goals. These are all relevant, but are very wide-ranging. From discussion with other Partnerships that have been established for several years, one of the key reasons for success is that they have put their efforts into delivering improvements in one or two key areas, building on those areas of common ground among the different interests of the Partnership. KS ran a quick exercise so that ISG members could see what people's individual priorities were, both at a catchment level and at an operational catchment level. The priorities for consideration were taken from the Icarus work and resulting draft themes/goals. Each person was asked to identify their top three priorities for each area (ie. Catchment and four operational catchments).

The top three priorities for each were:

Area	Priorities
Whole Catchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water level management (9) → (includes flood risk management) - Education/engagement (9) - Habitat/Species Protection
Rye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land management (12) - Habitat/Species Protection (10) - Sedimentation (6) - Education/ Engagement (6)

Upper Derwent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land management (10) - Habitat/ Species Protection (7) - Sedimentation (4) - Education/ Engagement (4)
Middle Derwent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education/ Engagement (8) - Fish Migration (6) - Water level management (5) → includes flood risk management) - Land management (5)
Lower Derwent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water level management (8) - Habitat/Species Protection (8)

There was a brief session during which ISG members commented on the results. The main points/comments were:

- Interesting to see that although the Partnerships were originally set up primarily to deal with Water Quality failures under WFD, water quality did not come out as a high priority. However, to make progress on some of the other priorities, all agreed that water quality improvements were often part of the wider solution.
- The exercise serves to highlight the linkages between many of the themes.
- Observed that INNS had not been picked at all, but some ISG members commented that this was primarily because they saw control of INNS as part of habitat/species protection.
- Noted that, as part of the Icarus work, it was agreed that flood risk management would not be included as a goal in its own right, but was part of the wider issue of water level management, which includes flood and drought. Agreed that the results for these two categories should be considered together and not separated in future.
- Education and engagement was highlighted as a top priority across the catchment. This is something that can be woven into all projects as well as doing specific education/engagement projects. Evidence of education/local engagement is also often a key requirement of securing specific funding for projects. TB commented that it would be good to run this exercise with local communities, but it was also noted that we don't want to undermine the structured process and resulting outputs of the Icarus work, which involved some local engagement to help develop the draft goals.

6. Funding: Looking forward

This item was not discussed in detail due to time constraints. DR had given an update earlier in the meeting on the new LEADER programmes which are due to open in the next couple of weeks. KS also mentioned the YWS Biodiversity Fund. This has just been launched as a 5-year programme and the closing date for applications is 5th February. Some ISG member organisations have been approached individually about this and YWS are consulting the Rivers Trusts on their proposed evaluation criteria. Emphasis is placed on projects that may be on YWS land, directly linked to YWS assets and/or high profile/visibility projects. DR commented that KS time should not be spent at this stage on producing bids for projects as there was still a lot of work to be done to establish the Partnership.

7. River Seph Project Update

DF had prepared a presentation for the meeting, but as we had overrun, KS gave a very brief update on the project. Work was ongoing, but due to the flooding over the Christmas/New Year period and current ground conditions which are still very wet, it had not been possible to

access some of the sites. A request will be submitted to Defra via the Environment Agency for some of the budget to be carried over into next financial year. We are waiting for confirmation that this will be possible, but informal discussions with the EA ICM team suggest that a request to carry money forward will be approved. DF will give an updated presentation to the next ISG meeting in March.

ACTION: DF to give a Seph presentation to the March ISG meeting.

8. AOB and Date of Next Meeting

No other business was raised. Next ISG meeting to be arranged for early March.

ACTION: KS to canvass for dates in first two week of March. Venue to be confirmed.

Karen Saunders

Partnership Facilitation Officer, Derwent Catchment Partnership – 3rd February 2016