

<h1>Meeting Notes</h1>		Meeting: Water Environment Governance Group	
<b>Attendees:</b> Richard Powell (Chair), Barry Bendall, Graham Dale, Melissa Lockwood, Mike Madine, David Alborough, Clare Deasy, Laura Kennedy, Stephen Thompson, Kim Wallis		<b>Date:</b> 27/05/21	<b>Location:</b> MS Teams
<b>Apologies:</b> Mike Jeffries		<b>Distribution:</b> Attendees and Apologies	
<b>Note: A full set of documents is available in the Water Environment Governance Group Teams Site</b>			
No.	Agenda Item and Notes		
1	<b>Introductions</b> RP welcomed all to the meeting. MJ sent his apologies.		
2	<b>Review of Actions</b> Item 2 on the Action Log was for RP to speak to Sarah on the Water Forum and for CD to speak to Ross Smith regarding inclusion in the Water Forum report. RP and CD have not had chance to complete this action yet however RP had spoken to Jim Strange regarding the inclusion of a paragraph on Water Environment Improvements. As part of the discussion for this item, GD requested the final APR narrative for the scheme to be brought to the WEGG for review. It was agreed to do this. <b>ACTION: RP to email Jim Strange to request the final APR narrative for WEGG review.</b> The other actions on the Action Log had been completed or were ongoing.		
3	<b>Frenze Beck and Filby Broad Year 1 Project Sign Off</b> <u>Frenze Beck</u> KW presented the evidence form for the project, which will improve 1.5km of accessible water environment. GD queried whether the ESW logo would be included on the interpretation board. KW confirmed that this had been requested. The group were happy that the project has been delivered as proposed. <b>DECISION: The WEGG agreed to sign off the Frenze Beck Year 1 project.</b>		

	<p><u>Filby Broad</u></p> <p>KW presented the evidence form for the project, which is on land owned by ESW and involves the improvement of 0.7km of accessible water environment. One of the motivations behind this project was to improve limited public access to Trinity Broads.</p> <p>BB queried whether (and if so, how) partner volunteer time was included within the total project cost. KW advised that volunteer time was not factored into the total cost for this project. CD confirmed that volunteer time has been included in some projects. The HLF approach was discussed, which may be useful as this is an already accepted method of accounting for volunteer time. ST advised that the HLF approach has been the basis for the inclusion of volunteer time in some Year 2 projects. Another element to consider is the time spent developing projects with partners.</p> <p>The group were happy that the project has been delivered as proposed.</p> <p><b>DECISION: The WEGG agreed to sign off the Filby Broad Year 1 project.</b></p>
4	<p><b>External Year 2 Projects Approval</b></p> <p>CD introduced this item. There is £53,000 to re-invest from Year 1 and it is for the group to consider how this is best invested. There will be further projects in the Year 2 plan, and a programme plan will be brought to the WEGG at the July meeting.</p> <p><u>Catch My Drift</u></p> <p>ST presented the form for the project, which would be delivered in partnership with Northumberland Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>The project is based on East Chevington Nature Reserve which is a former open cast coal mining site. The project began in 2020 with investigation work and is now moving into the delivery stage. Improvements will be made to the reed beds, pond, wildflower meadow, and access and interpretation at the site, as well as renovating the existing hides.</p> <p>GD queried which were the key areas for improvement from the funding contribution that NWG would make. ST confirmed this would be the two areas of reed bed restoration. It was agreed this should be highlighted in the project document.</p> <p><b>ACTION: ST to highlight the specific improvements that NWG funding contributes to within the Catch My Drift project document.</b></p> <p>The group were supportive of the proposal and happy for it to progress to the next stage.</p> <p><b>DECISION: The Catch My Drift Year 2 project was approved by the WEGG.</b></p> <p><u>Bocking, Blackwater</u></p> <p>KW presented the project form. The project relates to removal of blockages to fish passage on the watercourse.</p> <p>GD queried whether there were actions in place to address the wider network of barriers, as this project focused on a small area at the head of the catchment. KW advised that there is a strategic programme planned that aims to address all barriers, however initial efforts will focus on those that have the biggest impact or are easiest to address. There have been some issues with identifying landowners. This proposal will form part of a larger, longer term project.</p>

GD queried whether the water Catchment Teams is involved in assisting with the identification of landowners. KW confirmed this was the case.

GD asked whether all barriers will need to be removed for major benefit to be realised. KW advised that this would be the case but that improvements of varying scale can be made by removal of individual barriers depending upon their setting. Opening specific reaches of the river can still be beneficial for some fish.

BB queried whether there were any EA monitoring stations that could provide data to track the impact of the scheme (such as WFD monitoring points). KW to check.

**ACTION: KW to query whether there are any EA monitoring points within the Bocking Blackwater section of watercourse.**

Overall the group were happy to approve the project.

**DECISION: The Bocking Blackwater Year 2 project was approved by the WEGG.**

Breamish Valley Blue Space Project

ST presented this project, which would be delivered in partnership with the Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) and improve 7km of accessible water environment at a popular visitor site.

RP queried whether the citizen science work / bioblitz fed into any other actions. ST advised that work was part of a wider NNPA vision in the area.

ML asked whether the costs were for one year, and if so what the future plan was to sustain the improvements made. ST confirmed it would be for one year and that further activity in future could be discussed with NNPA. ML suggested that it would be useful to use the lessons learned from the one-year project to see how they could be integrated into future activities.

RP suggested this could be expanded into the customer impacts section to discuss the sustainability of the project outcomes for future, aiming to demonstrate how the project can provide a lasting legacy.

The group agreed to progress the project but would like to see focus on legacy benefits when the project is progressed.

**DECISION: The Breamish Valley Year 2 project was approved by the WEGG.**

Mardyke Valley

KW presented the project form, which would be delivered in partnership with the Land Trust. ESW are the landowner. The project is part of the Land of the Fanns landscape Partnership project, as a shortfall for investment to support interpretation was identified in the work planned.

RP encouraged involvement in this project as the asset is much valued by the local community, however there is a need to clarify the added value as it is an ESW site. It must be clear that the investment is over and above NWG's baseline activities and responsibilities, although investment at the site is considered critical for local wellbeing. BB agreed with this point. KW advised that significant time has been invested in developing the project and that this is above and beyond ESW duties. RP suggested the document be clear on this aspect so that readers are able to understand this.

The group's view was that there was further work to do on this proposal before it can be approved but it would welcome it to be brought back for approval at a future meeting.

**DECISION: The Mardyke Valley Year 2 project was not approved by the WEGG – to be revised and resubmitted if appropriate.**

Low Barns

ST presented the project document, which involves partnership work with Durham Wildlife Trust. Work would include the development of a new engagement hub, but the funding from NWG would be targeted toward habitat works, de-silting the lake, and path-resurfacing.

The group were happy to approve the project and considered improving access key alongside the biodiversity benefits.

**DECISION: The Low Barns Year 2 project was approved by the WEGG.**

River Waveney Access and Biodiversity

KW presented this project which has previously been discussed with the WEGG. It involves canoe access as a means of accessible water environment.

GD queried whether there was an official path around the Bungay Loop. RP and BB suggested this was a permissive path on common land.

BB felt the project was mixed and perhaps there should be focus on the River Waveney itself rather than solely the Bungay Loop. Canoe access on the Waveney is important but there are challenges to accessing the river in this way. It was queried whether the project could be more ambitious with the length of accessible water environment claimed as the canoe access applies to a longer length.

It was considered that it would be useful to be clear what the WEI funding would pay for and what the future approach would be. KW agreed to follow this up and clarify.

**ACTION: KW to clarify the contribution made by the WEI funding to the River Waveney project, consider the length claimed, and also include information on the future approach for this project in the documentation.**

The group felt the project should be approved but that further information on the added value and the length of accessible water environment claimed would be required in future.

**DECISION: The River Waveney Year 2 project was approved by the WEGG.**

River Roding

KW presented this project. In addition to this proposal, a much larger funding bid is being submitted for the park. The project is located at the edge of the ESW area and therefore presents a good opportunity to raise the profile of the company.

The group were supportive of the project and agreed to approve the proposal.

**DECISION: The River Roding Year 2 project was approved by the WEGG.**

5	<p><b>Projects Discussion</b></p> <p><u>Dipton</u></p> <p>ST presented this project which builds upon a WINEP phosphorus removal scheme, which is an approach that has previously been discussed by the group. The project was brought to the WEGG for feedback on the proposed approach and the inclusion of above and beyond elements into a package of improvements to benefit the area.</p> <p>There are two wildlife sites that could benefit from the improvements. There are opportunities to add boardwalks and improve watercourse crossings.</p> <p>BB felt the proposed approach looked good and suggested that it would be helpful to understand how the project would fit with the wider catchment needs (as determined by the local Catchment Partnership if appropriate). ST advised that the WINEP schemes were selected due to their impact on the watercourse and that this had been combined with community and local stakeholder input to determine for the over and above element.</p> <p>RP also felt the proposed approach looked good. ML welcomed building upon WINEP and enabling customer engagement with the baseline improvements delivered, in an area that might not otherwise be a focus for catchment work.</p> <p>BB queried whether money from the WEI scheme was perpetually re-invested. CD advised this was the principle that was being worked upon, however baseline costs at present are quite high therefore there may be relatively little reward in future years. The current AMP strategy is in development and review internally. More information will be shared on this in the July meeting.</p>
6	<p><b>Annual Reporting</b></p> <p>RP advised this item should be returned to in future when reporting requirements are better understood.</p> <p>CD advised this linked to the Ofwat requirement for the governance group to report and to consider how this is best done – potentially through the Water Forum or WF Environment Sub-Group.</p> <p>RP will speak to others to discuss how this should best work.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Reporting item to be included on future WEGG agenda following discussion by RP with others.</b></p>
7	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>No additional items raised.</p>