



RIVER LARK CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 22 April 2021 at 5.30pm

Present:

- Geoff Brighty – Board member Rivers Trust and Trustee of Norfolk Rivers Trust (GB)
- Ian Campbell – BWMG (IC)
- Nicola Crockford – RLCP Volunteer
- Nigel Elbourne – RLCP Mildenhall Representative (NE)
- Chris Gregory – RLCP Trustee, Mid-Lark Conservation Group (CG)
- Chris Hainsworth - Senior Warden, Natural England (CH)
- Lindsay Hargreaves – Chair of Lark Abstractors (LH)
- Andrew Hinchley – RLCP Trustee and Chair/ BWMG (Chair) (AH)
- Steph Holland – RLCP Admin and Volunteer (SH)
- David Hudson - RLCP Lark Villages Representative, BTFC (DH)
- Sam Hurst – Norfolk Rivers Trust (Shu)
- Oona Kelly – RLCP Volunteer
- Jim Meadows – RLCP Trustee and Vice Chair LAPS (JM)
- Rebecca Mundy – Chair of Pollution Group, Farm Adviser Norfolk & Suffolk for Natural England (RM)
- David Palmer – RLCP Trustee, LVA and RLCP Mildenhall Group (DP)
- Rosie Perham – Ramblers’ Association (RP)
- Gary Quilter – West Suffolk Council Open Spaces
- Libby Ranzetta – BWMG, Chalk Aquifer Alliance
- Graham Showell – RLCP Volunteer
- Glenn Smithson – RLCP, LAPS (GS)
- Richard Summers – Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership (RS)
- Ron West – Bury Ramblers (RW)
- Sam Westwood – CamEO and Catchment Engagement Manager, Anglian Water (SW)

In attendance: Alex Huggins – RLCP Admin

Apologies: David & Cathy Emerson, Lean Lywood, Chris Mahon, Andrew Francis, Will Cranstoun, Ellen Kirkby, Jim Stephens

1.	ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS	
1.1	Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 25 February 2021 were approved	
1.2	<u>Matters arising</u>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 Chris Gregory (CG) agreed to review project paperwork and to find a volunteer to adapt these for different projects. Done. David Hudson has volunteered to adapt paperwork for projects. • 5. The chair suggested a meeting to discuss getting volunteers together. Ongoing. • 6. CG and JS agreed to produce a draft Annual Report for the next RLCP meeting and to make it a more purposeful document. Done. • 8. SW would link RLCP volunteers with site managers at Fornhams and other places for information on effluent quality. Done. Procedure is telephone the day before. • 8. SW would organise an RLCP visit to Fornham all Saints treatment works. Awaiting lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. • 8. RLCP to draft response to EA review of designation of areas of water stress. Jim Stephens was drafting response. • 10. AH to write to RS regarding Telling the Story of the Abbey. Done. 	
2.	BFER/RIVER ACTIVITY ECOLOGY, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION	
	<u>River Restoration</u>	
	<p><u>Status of current Flempton restoration:</u> One year late the second BFER project has started below Flempton bridge. Glenn Smithson (GS) reported a very active water vole population resulting in two no-go zones and Nick Oliver had surveyed the site and would incorporate vole gutters at the back of the revetement works. The river restoration work went very well but it would soon be a struggle to find areas for volunteers to work in as major restoration works were needed as in some areas there was nothing left of the river.</p>	
	<p><u>Equipment and Materials:</u> Andrew Hinchley (AH) reported all volunteers are now issued with waders after their first time volunteering but RLCP was struggling with supplies. Equipment was now run by Catherine Emerson out of stores shared with Suffolk Wildlife Trust.</p>	
	<p><u>Volunteer administration/booking:</u> Steph Holland (SH) reported this was going well with 100 volunteers returning information and many volunteers had signed up for the work parties and for training.</p>	
	<p><u>Status of BFER Fish Passage</u> AH reported that areas downstream would be affected by change in river levels due to fish passage works so restoration work could not start until the river was settled at new levels. AH added that levels would not change downstream of Mildenhall so RLCP could look at volunteer restoration work in that area and that EA boreholes at Temple bridge had</p>	

	not shown a change in water levels so that needed to be clarified. AH said GS would organise a volunteer restoration programme and members noted there was more flexibility to work in downstream areas than previously thought. AH and GS would discuss this. Members discussed the pros and cons of the fish passage project and AH, GS, DH and Jim Meadows (JM) agreed to meet off-line to discuss this further.	AH and GS
3	VOLUNTEER LARK GROUPS/DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH	
	<p><u>Training:</u> Ian Campbell (IC) said water safety management training was a Bury Water Meadows (BWMG) requirement and asked if there was training for this planned? AH said RLCP needed to check the budget and initiate this training.</p> <p>Members noted Gary Quilter (GQ) was organising training for West Suffolk Council and co-ordinating with BWMG. AH said he would contact the trainer on RLCP's behalf and would liaise with IC. Members discussed first aid training and agreed it was fundamental and AH agreed to get this started.</p>	AH AH AH
	<p><u>Local group development:</u> AH suggested an informal Zoom session to discuss what could be done in particular groups. David Hudson (DH) volunteered to lead Lark Villages area; members noted David and Cathy Emerson lead the Fornhams area and AH asked for a volunteer to help run the Mildenhall area and suggested delivering leaflets and using social media to garner support there.</p>	
4	POLLUTION GROUP	
	<u>River quality and related testing/surveying areas</u>	
	<p><u>BFER partner Freshwater Habitats:</u> Graham Showell (GS), volunteer, had been testing water in 9 areas for nitrates and phosphates and reported his results would be uploaded the following day. SH said there was a further training date on the BFER website and on the Freshwater Habitat website should anyone be interested in volunteering for this.</p>	
	<p><u>European plastics project – Rivers Trust</u> Becks Mundy was working on the plastics project and had had a meeting to discuss training and equipment opportunities.</p>	
	<p><u>MoRPh</u> – SH reported the survey had started and 6 volunteers had undergone training. Chris Gregory (CG) said he had sent AH a draft spreadsheet to get paperwork in place which SH said was very helpful to avoid duplication.</p>	

	<p>GS said MoRPh survey work did not affect water voles and it would be interesting to see if the water voles moved back to where the river was trying to repair itself and added the survey was starting upstream and working downstream.</p> <p>AH said the MoRPh trainer had offered to run a virtual session on 'lessons learned' with all volunteers in a few weeks.</p>	
	<p><u>Analysis</u> (David E) – Becks Mundy noted David Emerson was managing the evidence base.</p>	
	<p><u>Sewage sub -group</u> – AH reported this group was re-starting and working within the pollution group. Members noted Libby Ranzetta was looking at national events and that AH had circulated the Anglian Water letter concerning the private members bill and hoped matters would progress from the local level to the national level.</p> <p>RM said meetings would be held monthly, reducing to bi-monthly once up and running. Nicola Crockford offered to help with this group as when snorkelling in rivers she had observed sudden declines in water quality. RM agreed to add NC to the meeting invite.</p>	RM
5	<p>RLCP Report on Lark pollution (Geoff Brighty (GB) and Sam Hurst (SH))</p>	
	<p>GB ran through the River Lark pollution review and action plan which had been circulated to all members before the meeting.</p> <p>Members noted there would be a webinar providing a fuller report on the river Lark pollution review given by GB and organised by BWMG on 12 May at 7pm.</p> <p>GB reported that the report had been presented to Jo Churchill, MP, at a meeting on 26 March 2021 and Jo Churchill was taking the river Lark pollution review to Rebecca Pow, Minister for the Environment, for her consideration. GB reported that Jo Churchill MP was impressed with how the action plan was already working to mitigate risks and that she would be helping on the action plan in the following 3 areas: communications and support in water infrastructure; to raise the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) review 2021 with the Minister for the Environment and the APPG on Chalk Streams focusing on chalk streams as sensitive environments; and engage with farmers and landowners on diffuse pollution. GB said his work was done and handed the report to the RLCP.</p> <p>AH thanked GB and SH for all their work and said the pollution group would progress items from the Action plan and the key items would be discussed at future RLCP meetings. AH said all Trustees would read the report and asked members to let him know if they wanted the next meeting to be structured around the report.</p>	<p>Pollution group</p> <p>Trustees/ members</p>
6	<p>LARK ABSTRACTION WORKSHOPS AND STUDY (Jim)</p>	
	<p><u>Report on planning meeting for next 'live' implementation phase</u></p>	

	This item was deferred until the next meeting.	
7	CamEO	
	<p><u>Report on CamEO conference</u> - SW said it had been very successful with good talks and members noted the Rivers Trust had recorded clips that could be viewed on You Tube. SW said CamEO were keen to invite Defra back for an extraordinary meeting as they had not been able to attend the conference.</p> <p>AH proposed environmental improvements be discussed in the early stages of the next WINEP review 2025/30. SW replied that in an ideal world Anglian Water would start asset management planning later in 2021 but it was not clear what the EA priorities were yet. SW said when it came to the point of building the WINEP, Anglian Water were keen to make it more collaborative and more transparent so there would not be questions post-implementation.</p>	
8	WATER RESOURCES EAST	
	<p><u>Update</u> There was a new EU project managed in the East by the Rivers Trust and Water Resources East and members noted there would be a high-level meeting the following week regarding the Lark.</p>	
9	RIVERS PATH SURVEY AND MAINTENANCE	
	Members noted this was delayed due to Covid-19 and planning was in progress for volunteering to start at the beginning of May.	
10	PLANNING	
	West Suffolk Plan – all submissions listed/moving to next phase	
	Members noted West Suffolk Council had confirmed that they had received the proposal submitted on behalf of Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership and the RLCP – incorporating the river Lark corridor strategy. RS said planning officers would respond to individual comments in early May and he might be able to report back at the next meeting. RS said there would be a consultation in January 2022 and that gentle pressure needed to be exerted as it was up to planners to look at the proposal and incorporate it into their plans.	
11	REPORT FROM ABBEY OF ST EDMUND HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP	
	RS thanked the RLCP for positive and constructive comments and noted all bar one responses had shown strong support of the mission, vision and five key themes. Members noted Libby Ranzetta (LR) had reported a summary of comments to the core group of the Heritage Partnership who were now revising their overarching plan, ready for the next stage of consulting with the local community over the summer/autumn 2021.	

	<p>RS said the Partnership was working closely with English Heritage on interpretation panels and the partnership may fundraise locally to extend interpretation panels with English Heritage's help.</p> <p>Ron West (RW) asked if there would be any excavations in the old tennis court area?</p> <p>RS said it was on the list and they were hoping to do so for the millennium celebrations but it depended on grant funding.</p> <p>AH thanked RS for his report.</p>	
12	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	<p>Thursday 24 June 5.30pm</p> <p>Thursday 16 September 5.30pm Thursday 25 November 5.30pm</p>	
13	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	No other business was tabled.	

ACTION LOG

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM
2	AH said GS would organise a volunteer restoration programme and members noted there was more flexibility to work in downstream areas than previously thought. AH and GS would discuss this.	AH/GS
3	AH said RLCP needed to check the budget for water safety management training and initiate this training	AH
3	Members noted Gary Quilter (GQ) was organising training for West Suffolk Council and co-ordinating with BWMG. AH said he would contact the trainer on RLCP's behalf and would liaise with IC	AH
3	Members discussed first aid training and agreed it was fundamental and AH agreed to get this started.	AH
4	RM agreed to add NC to the meeting invite for the sewage sub-group	RM
5	the pollution group would progress items from the Action plan and the key items would be discussed at future RLCP meetings.	Pollution group

5	AH said all Trustees would read the report and asked members to let him know if they wanted the next meeting to be structured around the report.	Trustees/ members
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