



RIVER LARK CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 24 June 2021 at 5.30pm

- Present:
- Ian Campbell – BWMG (IC)
  - Nigel Elbourne – RLCP Mildenhall Representative (NE)
  - Andrew Francis – Farm Director, Elveden Estates (AF)
  - Chris Gregory – RLCP Trustee (CG)
  - Andrew Hinchley – RLCP Trustee and Chair/ BWMG (Chair) (AH)
  - Steph Holland – RLCP Admin and Volunteer (SH)
  - David Hudson - RLCP Lark Villages Representative, BTFC (DH)
  - Jim Meadows – RLCP Trustee and Vice Chair LAPS J(M)
  - Rebecca Mundy – Chair of Pollution Group, Farm Adviser Norfolk & Suffolk for Natural England (RM)
  - David Palmer – RLCP Trustee, RLCP Mildenhall Group (DP)
  - Rosie Perham – Ramblers’ Association (RP)
  - Gary Quilter – West Suffolk Council Open Spaces (GQ)
  - Libby Ranzetta – BWMG, Chalk Aquifer Alliance (LR)
  - Glenn Smithson – RLCP, LAPS (GS)
  - Jim Stephens – RLCP Trustee and Treasurer/BWMG (JS)
  - 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: Chris Hainsworth, Natural England; David and Cathy Emerson

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| <b>1.</b> | <b>ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS</b>   |  |
| 1.1       | Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 22 April 2021 were <b>approved</b>   |  |
| 1.2       | <u>Matters arising</u>   |  |
|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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. <b>Done.</b></li> </ul> |  |

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|    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 AH said RLCP needed to check the budget for water safety management training and initiate this training. <b>Awaiting funding from Rivers Trust (WaterCOG).</b></li> <li>• 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. <b>Discussed in item 3 on agenda.</b></li> <li>• 3 Members discussed first aid training and agreed it was fundamental and AH agreed to get this started. <b>Bundled with water safety training and happening on the same weekend.</b></li> <li>• 4 RM agreed to add NC to the meeting invite for the sewage sub-group. <b>Done.</b></li> <li>• 5 the pollution group would progress items from the Action plan and the key items would be discussed at future RLCP meetings. <b>To be discussed under item 4 on agenda.</b></li> <li>• 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. <b>No reply and meeting is not structured around the report.</b></li> </ul>       |  |
| 2. | <b>BFER/RIVER ACTIVITY ECOLOGY, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION</b>   |  |
|    | <b><u>River Restoration</u></b>  |  |
|    | <p><u>Status of current Flempton restoration:</u></p> <p>GS reported a positive start, but hardly any invertebrate life in that section of the river. GS <b>thanked</b> volunteers for their tremendous effort. Attendees <b>agreed</b> to his suggestion of a working schedule defining where and when work takes place.</p> <p><u>Tollgate:</u><br/>Permit is in place and GS was waiting for Greene King formalities.</p> <p><u>Fullers Mill:</u><br/>Fullers Mill are happy for RLCP volunteers to continue working on river restoration from the existing improvements up to Forestry Commission land. GS suggested using alder trees provided by Suffolk Wildlife Trust to create heavily wooded sections on alternate banks. Previous work has resulted in a central channel that keeps itself clear of burr weed and silt and Fullers Mill were happy for RLCP volunteers to carry out gravel augmentation in the central channel, to be done in the winter months. GS said there was a permit in place to carry out work at the top of Fullers Mill towards West Stow but, as it was Forestry Commission land, only Forestry Commission volunteers were allowed to carry out works.</p> |  |
|    | <p><u>Plans for 2021-22:</u></p> <p>GS said there were two plans of action but no volunteer work would be needed this year or next. Attendees discussed water safety training, noting this was a requirement of West Suffolk council but was voluntary for RLCP volunteers.</p>  |  |

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|                 | <p><b>CG asked whether the Forestry Commission owned both banks</b> and attendees noted Suffolk Wildlife Trust thought they owned one of the banks so it was not clear.</p> <p>Re Tollgate, AH explained since Greene King had been taken over there was a tighter management process in place and patience was needed and JS pointed out the permit ran out in 2023.</p> <p>DH said the Bury Trout Club had BFER funding and a permit in place for works in West Stow upstream of Farm Pool and would be happy for the RLCP to supply 3 volunteers for each work party. DH said the Bury Trout Club would supply materials and that he would initiate a risk assessment and asked for the RLCP to provide PPE. AH said he would follow that up with DH.</p>   | <p>AH/DH</p>            |
|                 | <p><u>Volunteer administration/booking:</u><br/>Nothing to add since the last meeting.</p>   |                         |
|                 | <p><b><u>Himalayan Balsam Campaign</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IC reported that upstream the river Lark had been surveyed from Rougham road through to Eastgate weir and HB had been found just beyond Eastgate weir, where the EA have their straw bales. The river Lark had also been surveyed from Tesco supermarket through to the start of the Lark Valley path at UPS and a reasonable amount of HB had been found.</li> <li>• The Emersons had surveyed from UPS to Hengrave and had pulled HB on Atkins' land.</li> <li>• NE had surveyed from Jubilee field to Barton Mills and had not seen any HB and NE said he would survey from the other side of A11 to Icklingham.</li> <li>• DH would be surveying from Flempton to Lackford bridge the following week.</li> </ul> <p>SH said there would be a work party on 10 July pulling HB from Fornham bridge to Duck's sluice and 4 volunteers had signed up. SH added dates needed to be arranged for HB pulling between UPS and the Fornham golf course using experienced people and said she would liaise with NE, GS and DH.</p> <p>DH said there was lots more giant hogweed and he had reported it to Suffolk County Council as it was their responsibility to remove it.</p> | <p>SH/NE/<br/>GS/DH</p> |
|                 | <p><b><u>Status of BFER Fish Passage</u></b><br/>There has been no progress. A further Mildenhall (LAPS, landowners, town council) meeting has been requested with James Dyke, fisheries officer with EA, who is planning to build a bridge to the island.</p>   |                         |
| <p><b>3</b></p> | <p><b>VOLUNTEER LARK GROUPS/DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH</b></p>   |                         |
|                 | <p><u>Training:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restoration training sessions were taking place on 10 and 17 July. SH agreed to let IC know which attendees were BWMG volunteers.</li> </ul>  | <p>SH</p>               |

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|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety sessions were provisionally booked for 2 and 3 October 2021.</li> <li>• Advanced restoration training was provisionally booked for 23 October 2021. AH to discuss the plan for the day with GS, DH and Rob Mungoven.</li> </ul> <p><b>IC asked whether West Suffolk Council were planning any training?</b><br/>GQ said he had a trainer from Atlantic college and was planning to run training in August/September in Nowton Park and added he would have up to 6 spare places and that he would liaise with IC once he had dates.</p> | AH/GS/<br>DH/Rob<br>Mungoven |
|          | <p><u>Local group development:</u><br/>Attendees noted there were plans for a Summer garden party on the 21 or 22 August to take place by the river Lark.</p>   | GQ                           |
| <b>4</b> | <b>POLLUTION GROUP</b>  |                              |
|          | <p><u>River Lark Pollution report actions</u><br/>RM had left the meeting and attendees noted there would be a pollution report on actions at the next meeting with RM.</p>   |                              |
|          | <p><u>Other issues to report</u><br/>None.</p>  |                              |
|          | <p><u>Sewage pollution group</u><br/>LR reported the sewage pollution group had met twice, were organising themselves well and had information from groups doing the same work elsewhere and they would love to benefit from JS's funding application, once it was through (see item 5).</p> <p><b>AH asked if they were looking at different sources of pollution?</b><br/>LR said they were and added the group comprised 8-9 people.</p>   |                              |
|          | <u>Citizen science</u>  |                              |
|          | <p><u>Lakes and Ponds BFER partner Freshwater Habitats:</u><br/>SH reported her surveying had been completed with most readings in the mid to high range for phosphates and nitrates and she was waiting to hear from other volunteers.</p>   |                              |
|          | <p><u>European plastics project</u> – Rivers Trust<br/>BWMG had run a webinar for members and were looking for team leaders. AH had been contacting groups along the river and reported positive activity.</p> <p>Attendees noted there would be a pollution report on actions at the next meeting with RM.</p>   |                              |
|          | <p><u>MoRPh</u> – Had been very successful and the RLCP had applied for more funding. Surveying had been completed before the vegetation was too high. The course instructor was very happy with work and SH said there were plans to cover a new</p>   |                              |

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|                 | <p>section near Cavenham and Rob Clapham of EA suggested surveying Cavenham Heath before and after the water levels change.</p> <p>Attendees noted the report covering all areas in BFER would be published in September.</p>  |              |
| <p><b>5</b></p> | <p><b>LARK ABSTRACTION WORKSHOPS AND STUDY</b></p>   |              |
|                 | <p>JS highlighted the following:</p> <p>A grant application for £30,000 was in from us with the CaBA water resources team through the 'Water for Tomorrow' and 'Priority Catchments' funding. Once through, half would be used for the abstraction pilot initiative and half for RLCP catchment water management.</p> <p>RLCP want to support to Lark Abstractors Group so it can form a properly operational water cooperative for their water sharing pilot's implementation and to get Cranfield university back to do research work and put in place operational plans for the water sharing initiatives. JS explained all this had to be done within the highly constraining existing regulations, finding novel ways the EA can permit shared river abstractions by the individual license holders on the river.</p>   |              |
| <p><b>6</b></p> | <p><b>CamEO</b><br/>Update from SW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There had been a governance review looking at where the partnership was now and where it was going. SW would send notes and feedback forms to RLCP members via SH.</li> <li>• CamEO had been gathering partnerships together to identify priority project areas and now have a story map (with RLCP input) which will go live on the website. The website will be a more useful resource and there will be a link to the RLCP website.</li> </ul> <p><b>Anglian Water</b><br/>Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had produced a business case for Jo Churchill MP, but was not sure what she would do, adding RLCP would have a key role in any communications put out.</li> <li>• SW asked for dates of RLCP river restoration work parties and SW would follow up with the site operations technician at Fornham water works.</li> <li>• Anglian Water was going to get started on the EDM report and had taken on extra staff due to the number of Freedom of Information requests they were receiving.</li> <li>• Anglian Water would be making amendments to the tenancy agreement for the Community Woodlands in Fornham and said the RLCP may take on the tenancy agreement.</li> <li>• WINEP Lark Augmentation 2024 – Anglian Water would be building a strategic pipeline to bring water into the catchment which had several implications one of which was the recirculation scheme would not be</li> </ul> | <p>SW/SH</p> |

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|          | <p>going ahead. SW suggested Martin Bowes talk at the next RLCP meeting and AH <b>agreed</b> to contact him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit to Fornham treatment works – ongoing.</li> </ul> <p><b>AH asked if RLCP volunteers could help with improving Lark tributaries?</b><br/>SW said the walk-over had been done and there was a budget for that and that volunteers would be welcome.</p>   | AH |
| <b>7</b> | <b>WATER RESOURCES EAST</b>  |    |
|          | <p><u>Water for Tomorrow</u></p> <p>JS explained that this was a major new project across 3 basins in the UK and 2 in France which was funded by the Interreg partnership to improve the North Sea and Channel region of which our Cam, Ely and Ouse catchment which is one of the basins. The RLCP 'local' funding application for £30,000 (see item 5 on agenda) is to support the implementation of the Lark River abstraction pilot and to enhance Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) communication and engagement, specifically addressing catchment water resources and the recently forged Lark pollution action plan.</p> <p>For water resources the aim is to improve the shared understanding of the catchment water balance with a scientific underpinning of how abstracting of ground water relates to base flow of the river and to increase the understanding of drought sensitivity of ground water abstractions and how the flow of the river interacts. This will allow RLCP to bring better collaboration to ensure the ecosystem is working well.</p> <p>The funding for the pollution action plan will support citizen science, water monitoring activities and ensuring strong administration for implementation.</p> <p>AH said more time would be spent on this once funding was through.</p> |    |
|          | <p><u>HR Wallingford Wetlands Modelling</u></p> <p>This had been approved the day before and now there was a tool to understand where new wetlands could be created. 3 catchments, including the Lark, would be used for data and the RLCP would support them with their initial needs.</p>  |    |
|          | <p><u>Natural Capital project – systematic conservation</u></p> <p>To be reported on at the next RLCP meeting. JS signposted people to WRE website for further information.</p>  |    |
| <b>8</b> | <b>RIVERS PATH SURVEY AND MAINTENANCE</b>  |    |
|          | Implementation still awaited.  |    |
| <b>9</b> | <b>PLANNING</b>  |    |

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|           | <p>West Suffolk Plan – AH had attended Green Infrastructure workshop and explained the West Suffolk Plan would contain a separate green infrastructure document.</p> <p><b>RS asked if AH had received feedback on the submission?</b><br/>AH said he had not but had told them of the submission and had resubmitted it together with the GIS and they had replied thanking him.</p> <p><b>RS asked if AH had made the point that they should look at structure as well as green and blue?</b><br/>AH said he had through the post-it notes exercise during the workshop.</p>  |    |
| <b>10</b> | <b>REPORT FROM ABBEY OF ST EDMUND HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP</b>  |    |
|           | <p>RS reported the core group had agreed revisions to the overarching plan which included comments from BWMG and RLCP and the plan now looked stronger and referenced the chalk stream and the creation of a visitor centre in the future. The next step would be designing the local community consultation which would probably take place this Autumn. RS said there was now a revised programme of 75 projects to take place over the next 5-10 years and they were applying for funding to the Heritage Lottery fund and elsewhere. RS added they were working closely with English Heritage and there had been much progress on heritage interpretation panels in the wider area.</p> |    |
| <b>12</b> | <b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>   |    |
|           | <p><b>Thursday 16 September 5.30pm</b></p> <p>Thursday 25 November 5.30pm</p>   |    |
| <b>13</b> | <b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>   |    |
|           | <p><u>RLCP AGM</u>- SH would send out a survey to decide on timing and format.</p> <p>SH announced the Green Fair would take place on 4 July and LR and AH would be speaking.</p>   | SH |

The meeting ended at 7.30pm

#### ACTION LOG

| AGENDA ITEM | ACTION   | BY WHOM         |
|-------------|--|-----------------|
| 2           | DH said the Bury Trout Club had BFER funding and a permit in place for works in West Stow upstream of Farm Pool and would be happy for the RLCP to supply 3 volunteers for each work party. DH said the Bury Trout Club would supply materials and that he would initiate a risk assessment and asked for the RLCP to provide PPE. AH said he would follow that up with DH | AH/DH           |
| 2           | Dates needed to be arranged for HB pulling between UPS and the Fornham golf course using experienced people and SH said she would liaise with NE, GS and DH  | SH/NE/GS/<br>DH |

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| 3  | Restoration training sessions were taking place on 10 and 17 July. SH agreed to let IC know which attendees were BWMG volunteers.  | SH                      |
| 3  | Advanced restoration training was provisionally booked for 23 October 2021. AH to discuss the plan for the day with GS, DH and Rob Mungoven                              | AH/GS/DH/<br>R Mungoven |
| 3  | GQ would have up to 6 spare training places and that he would liaise with IC once he had dates.  | GQ                      |
| 6  | There had been a Cameo governance review looking at where the partnership was now and where it was going. SW would send notes and feedback forms to RLCP members via SH. | SW/SH                   |
| 6  | AH <b>agreed</b> to contact Martin ?? of Anglian Water to invite him to talk at next RLCP meeting.   | AH                      |
| 13 | <u>RLCP AGM</u> - SH would send out a survey to decide on timing and format.   | SH                      |