



RIVER LARK CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 17 February 2022 at 5.30pm

Present:

- Nicola Crockford – Volunteer/RLCP Lark Tributary citizen science group (NC)
- Christopher Cross – BWMG (CC)
- Nigel Elbourne – Volunteer/RLCP Mildenhall Representative (NE)
- Karen Flack - Volunteer/RLCP Lark Tributary citizen science group (KF)
- Chris Hainsworth - Senior Warden, Natural England (CH)
- Andrew Hinchley – RLCP Trustee and Chair (AH)
- Steph Holland – RLCP Admin and Volunteer (SH)
- David Hudson - BTC (DH)
- Jim Meadows – RLCP Trustee and Vice Chair LAPS (JM)
- David Palmer – RLCP Trustee, RLCP Mildenhall Group (DP)
- Rosie Perham – Ramblers’ Association (RP)
- Gary Quilter – West Suffolk Council Open Spaces (GQ)
- Graham Showell – Volunteer/RLCP Lark Tributary citizen science group (GRS)
- Glenn Smithson – RLCP, LAPS (GS)
- Jim Stephens – Trustee, RLCP Treasurer (JS)
- Richard Summers – Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership (RS)
- Bill Sutherland – Volunteer/RLCP Lark Tributary citizen science group (BS)
- Ron West – Bury Ramblers (RW)

In attendance: Alex Huggins

1	APOLOGIES	ACTION
	Apologies were received from: Gary Ewington, Libby Ranzetta, Clive MacLeod, John Sayer, Sam Westwood.	
2	MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF RLCP MEETING OF 25 NOVEMBER 2021	
	<p>Minutes from RLCP AGM and Meeting of 25 November 2021 were confirmed by attendees who had been present for that meeting.</p> <p><u>Matters arising:</u></p> <p>8. <i>It was agreed to have a separate sub-meeting to discuss riverfly monitoring in light of Covid-19 and status of CSOs.</i></p> <p>Ongoing.</p> <p>6. <i>WC agreed to put SWT’s Head of Conservation in touch with RP.</i></p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	

3	INTRODUCTION OF NEW SUFFOLK WILDLIFE TRUST RIVERS OFFICER, ALICE WICKMAN	
	<p>Attendees noted Alice Wickman would be starting in the post of Rivers Officer on 1 April and was not present at the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Chris Cross (CC) to the meeting. CC advised he was volunteering for BWMG and had worked for Anglian Water and had experience of sewage works and overflows, was now retired and his experience could be useful for the RLCP.</p>	
4	BFER/RIVER ACTIVITY ECOLOGY, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION (GS)	
	<p><u>River Restoration Work parties – BFER supported</u> GS provided an update as follows:</p>	
	Status of current Flempton restoration:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two sessions had taken place. • Volunteers had been revetting banks, creating a brash shelf downstream and trimming back sprouting willows. • Willows on the footpath side needed to be removed as they were falling and taking the footpath with them. • The river would improve. 	
	Further stage at Fullers Mill – large scale gravel enhancement	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The permit had arrived for the 6 metres cubed of gravel needed for the restoration works. • The river was missing mobile gravel so volunteers would choose areas to deposit this and let the river move it around. • This would help with providing invertebrate habitat which would help with fish breeding. • GS needed to meet with SH to organise volunteers to make a start prior to the visit by MPs Rebecca Pow and Jo Churchill. (Edit note: this visit now postponed) <p>JS added Fullers Mill were keen for works to start at the beginning of March and not before.</p>	
	Fish passage from North Sea to the upstream Lark – status of Mildenhall work	
	<p>GS said the information in the BFER newsletter conflicted with the EA position and these two organisations needed to communicate.</p> <p>Attendees noted work at Mildenhall would not happen for 2 years.</p> <p>JS advised the RLCP was trying to coordinate better communication.</p> <p>GS added the RLCP was seeking permits for work to start after summer on other sections of the river but the works previously mentioned would be the last before the bird nesting season began.</p>	

	<p><u>Equipment purchase:</u> Attendees noted that a petrol driven hydraulic post rammer and a portable capstan winch had been bought thanks to BFER funding for which the RLCP was very grateful as it would upgrade restoration activity. Attendees discussed their use and agreed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol for its use needed to be in place and uploaded to the website. • GS and DH would construct a training package and would send training dates to SH. • The equipment and its use needed to be added to the insurance policy. 	
5	VOLUNTEER UPDATE (SH)	
	<p>SH highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 16 volunteers had helped at Flempton Bridge and 115 volunteers were on the list. • 17 volunteers were keen to help with citizen science for the new tributaries water quality group and this was being launched that weekend. 	
6	NATIONAL FLAGSHIP STATUS (AH)	
	Objectives to 2030	
	AH advised that these objectives would be defined later in 2022.	
	Source of funding (“WINEP-Water Industry Environment Fund)	
	AH said it was important for this to get this Flagship initiative moving in the next WINEP 5-year cycle.	
	River Lark Natural Capital Assessment – Study funded by AW	
	<p>Attendees noted the following: This study has already started and is a feasibility exercise into the natural capital assets of the Lark and prioritise investment in one or more tributaries or main river segments.</p> <p>DH asked which tributaries were being rated?</p> <p>AH answered all the tributaries were being rated. Anglian Water had also started working their Lark tributaries restoration projects under WINEP to be implemented in 2024.</p> <p>Attendees noted key documents somewhat relating to this were available on the RLCP website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Lark Pollution Review and Action Plan • River Lark Catchment Appraisal • Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy 2021 by Charles Rangeley-Wilson (Chair of CaBA chalk stream restoration group). 	
7	WATER FOR TOMORROW – (JS)	
	<p>JS shared three brief presentation documents with attendees (attached) and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RLCP needed to collaborate and where relevant align our WfT projects with the projects being delivered by the other sub-catchments. • AH and JS have already begun collaboration with the Broadland project which has parallel features with our Citizen Science water quality roll-out. • The high-level project manager for WfT is Dr Fadairo Ukwuori who would make sure the 3 projects in the Anglian region are co-ordinated and fitting in with the wider WfT objectives. 	

	<p>DH asked how much grant money had been awarded to RLCP?</p> <p>JS replied £30,000 had been given for the period October 2021 to April 2023.</p>	
8	WATER RESOURCES EAST	
	<p>Attendees noted there had been a presentation the previous meeting.</p> <p>CC asked whether abstraction was from the river Lark or from the chalk aquifer underneath?</p> <p>AH said Water Resources East had produced a draft Regional Plan covering water requirements until 2050 which could be read here: https://wre.org.uk/projects/the-regional-plan/</p>	
9	CITIZEN SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT	
	<p><u>Lark Observatory</u> LR was not present and attendees noted LR had reported on the Lark Observatory at the previous meeting.</p>	
	<p><u>Tributary Monitoring project</u> (attached RLCP 2022-02)</p> <p>SH highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam Hurst from Rivers Trust was training 17 volunteers who were keen to monitor water quality in river Lark tributaries. • Volunteers would be starting with Tuddenham and Culford streams and would look at all 7 eventually. • Volunteers would be looking at ammonia, dissolved oxygen, phosphates, nitrates and PH levels as well as conducting MoRPH surveys. • Volunteers would be conducting a snapshot of the condition of all 7 tributaries at one time in one spot. • Funding had been received from EA for the training ,from “Water for Tomorrow” for staff time, and from councillors’ locality budgets for equipment and reagents and their disposal. <p><u>Water Test Equipment:</u></p> <p>A Lovibond MD610 had been selected and GRS was managing the equipment and supporting equipment so volunteers could start as soon as they had received training and the reagents had turned up.</p> <p>Bill Sutherland (BS) suggested starting to plan for measuring water flow in order to undertake a nutrient budget and JS agreed that water flow monitoring would be integral, but RLCP needed to concentrate on recruiting and training volunteers first and in addition base flow realities for sections of the Lark was very slack gradients and very weak flows.</p> <p>Attendees noted expert scientists were involved as volunteers in the project and that Prof. Kate Heppell (national academic leader in water quality citizen science) would assist/review the project periodically.</p>	

10	CamEO – (SW/JL)	
	Not present. No update tabled.	
11	POLLUTION GROUP UPDATE - SH	
	<p>Attendees noted this had been covered under items 6 and 9. In addition, RLCP volunteers would be visiting Fornham Sewage Treatment Works at the end of February.</p> <p>The next Pollution group meeting would be on 4 April and anyone could participate.</p> <p>CC pointed out that Feargal Sharkey's awareness raising campaign had increased public awareness of pollution in rivers and the visit by the two MPs was an important opportunity to send a good message to government, push the agenda forward in Defra and make capital available for improvement.</p>	
12	PLANNING - West Suffolk Local Plan -Development of Green Infrastructure as a major component (RS)	
	<p>RS advised that progress had been delayed with the next consultation phase taking place in May 2023.</p> <p>AH agreed to upload the synopsis of the River Lark Corridor Strategy to the RLCP website and to add this as an agenda item for the next meeting should newer members wish to discuss this.</p> <p>RS reminded attendees that the hope was the River Lark Corridor Strategy would form part of the West Suffolk Local Plan and RS was alerting the council to the crossover between it and the Development of Green Infrastructure Plan.</p>	AH
13	REPORT FROM ABBEY OF ST EDMUND HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP (RS)	
	<p>RS explained the partnership had been set up in 2016 and had produced a draft overarching plan and was consulting on this with the local community in parallel with the millennium celebrations.</p> <p>RS added the Abbey precinct had not been laid out traditionally due to the direction of flow of the rivers Lark and Linnet and then shared digital and graphical reconstructions of the Abbey Church.</p> <p>Karen Flack left the meeting 7.08pm Chris Green and Graham Showell left the meeting 7.10pm</p>	
14	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	<p>Thursday April 21 at 5.30pm</p> <p>AGM- date to be confirmed; Thursday June 16 at 5.30pm; Thursday September 15 at 5.30pm; Thursday November 17 at 5.30pm</p>	
15	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p>Attendees noted the RLCP was looking for annual sponsors from the business community in order to broaden relevance and interact with the wider community.</p> <p>Jim Meadows tendered his resignation as a Trustee and as a member of the RLCP due to health reasons.</p>	

	<p>The RLCP thanked Jim for his long service and help and expressed hope that a new representative from LAPS would join as it was important for LAPS to be represented within the RLCP.</p>	
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The meeting ended at 7.14pm

ACTION LOG

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM
2	It was agreed to have a separate sub-meeting to discuss riverfly monitoring in light of Covid-19 and status of CSOs.	SW/IH/AH
2	WC agreed to put SWT's Head of Conservation in touch with RP.	WC
12	AH agreed to upload the synopsis of the River Lark Corridor Strategy to the RLCP website and to add this as an agenda item for the next meeting should newer members wish to discuss this.	AH