



RIVER LARK CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 21 April 2022 at 5.30pm

Present: Andrew Hinchley – RLCP Trustee and Chair (AH)
 Caroline Chamberlain – (CC)
 Chris Cross – BWMG (CCr)
 Nigel Elbourne – RLCP Mildenhall Representative (NE)
 Chris Hainsworth - Senior Warden, Natural England (CH)
 Steph Holland – RLCP Admin and Volunteer Coordinator (SH)
 Jessie Leach – Rivers Trust and Cameo (JL)
 David Palmer – RLCP Trustee, LVA and RLCP Mildenhall Group (DP)
 Gary Quilter- West Suffolk Council Open Spaces (GQ)
 Anna Saltmarsh (AS)
 Graham Showell – (GSh)
 Alice Wickman – Suffolk Wildlife Trust (AW)

In attendance: Alex Huggins – Minutes

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| 1. | APOLOGIES | |
| | Apologies were received from: Glenn Smithson, James Stephens, Sam Westwood, Andrew Francis, Richard Summers, John Sayer | |
| 2. | ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS | |
| 2.1 | The Chair welcomed Alice Wickman (AW) of SWT to the meeting. AW introduced herself explaining she had started a new role as rivers advisor covering all rivers in Suffolk and would be supporting community groups, working with farmers, land managers and providing advice on river management. Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 17 February 2022 were approved | |
| 2.2 | <u>Matters arising</u> | |
| | <i>2. Attendees noted activity had restarted so there had been no need for a meeting. Done.</i> | |

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| | <p>2. AH would check if WC had put SWT's head of conservation in touch with RP. Ongoing.</p> <p>12. SH agreed to add index to the RLCP website as well. Done.</p> | |
| 3. | BFER/RIVER ACTIVITY ECOLOGY, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION | |
| | <p><u>River Restoration</u> GS had provided a report and SH highlighted the following and shared panel images:</p> | |
| | <p><u>Flempton restoration:</u> Works had been completed providing much needed diversification.</p> | |
| | <p><u>Fullers Mill:</u> The gravel augmentation had been concluded and GS thanked Annie and the team at Perennial for making volunteers welcome.</p> | |
| | <p><u>Tollgate – Downstream:</u> There was a permit in place for upstream work and it would be good to look downstream as well. The EA would additionally be looking at the Lark behind the Coop where there was an inactive section and where it was proposed that EA would remove a weir.</p> <p>CCr asked whether there were any concerns about the river level when the weir was removed? SH said it would improve the flow and offered to put CCr in touch with GS. CCr said he would go and look at the weir.</p> <p>SH added the RLCP would be organising Himalayan Balsam pulling there and Morph surveys would be arranged.</p> <p>GS thanked the brilliant volunteers and the BFER for funding the purchase of specialist equipment. Attendees noted the RLCP would be organising a training session with GS on how to use the specialist equipment.</p> | SH |
| 4 | CITIZEN SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT | |
| | <p>SH provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current project was monitoring water quality of the river Lark tributaries. • Sam Hurst and Zac Battams (Norfolk Rivers Trust) had run a training day for volunteers in their own time. • Volunteers had started monitoring on the Tuddenham and Culford streams in March and April 2022 • SH presented a slide show detailing the monitoring progress report <p>Attendees noted the purchase of specialist equipment had been enabled thanks to support from local councillors and the Chair also thanked the Water for Tomorrow project for helping with funding and the EA for providing training.</p> | |

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| | <p>GSh shared a slide show detailing chemical analysis samples using the Lovibond MD610 and explained how this specialist equipment worked.</p> <p>Attendees noted results, such as the level of ammonia around lake at Great Livermere, raised questions and AH said this would be raised when Sam Hurst next met the Ampton Estate. AH thanked GSh for his help.</p> | |
| | <p>AS provided a QGIS update explaining this was free software for visualising data through maps and she had gathered data from bodies such as EA, Defra and the British Ornithological Society.</p> <p>AS shared a map of the river Lark catchment showing the Tributary Group's results.</p> <p>Attendees asked whether it was intended to sample the same points at regular intervals? SH said there would be a meeting that week to decide on the next sampling activity.</p> | |
| 5 | OTHER VOLUNTEER UPDATES | |
| | <p>SH said she had recently sent out a newsletter including volunteer updates and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volunteer was needed to minute meetings • Volunteers were needed to run stalls at events • SH would contact volunteers in the next two weeks with summer plans • Bury Trout club had requested help for a joint project making willow fencing <p><i>GSh left the meeting 6.22pm</i></p> <p>AH added volunteers to be Trustees were also needed.</p> | |
| 6 | NATIONAL FLAGSHIP STATUS | |
| | <p>AH said it was important to get the Lark Flagship initiative moving in the next WINEP 5-year cycle and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglian Water would initiate and drive this project forward. • Anglian Water had run a desk study to ascertain where the best tributaries were to spend the money, with Cavenham and Tuddenham streams standing out due to agricultural pollution. • The project would start in 2024. • RLCP would be consulted and, once they had seen the desk study, they would summarise and share it. | |
| 7 | CamEO | |
| | <p>JL of the Rivers Trust updated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual CamEO conferences would take place in May. | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be an in-person event in the autumn to showcase project work, knowledge and events. • They were looking to recruit a full-time CamEO officer. • CaSTCo. Was a collaboration which would help implement a national framework for a catchment monitoring cooperative, using citizen science and incorporating standardised approaches to data collection and management. • River Lark would benefit from this collaboration with many different technical specialists being available to help nationally to ensure quality. <p>AH thanked JL for her update and advised attendees this last point was on the agenda for the citizen science meeting the following Tuesday. AH asked JL whether CaSTCo would have started by September?</p> <p>JL said it would and explained there were 4 phases to the project and offered to look through the proposal with AH in October to see where it had got to.</p> <p>AH asked whether the RLCP could borrow equipment? JL answered this depended on the parameters and the testing and that she needed to go through the citizen science plan with AH in detail.</p> <p>AH said a clearer view on monitoring equipment available would be very helpful and asked JL when would further information be released?</p> <p>JL said further information would be released in early May.</p> <p>AH thanked JL.</p> | |
| 8 | POLLUTION GROUP UPDATE | |
| | <p>Attendees noted the tributaries project had been covered under item 4.</p> <p>SH Highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pollution group met every 2 months. • Next meeting would take place on Monday 6 June at 6.30pm [Note: later amended to June 13th]. • Everyone was welcome to join. <p>CCr said he had joined and added he had 16 years of experience working for Anglian Water.</p> <p>SH thanked CCr and said it would be great to have him at the meetings.</p> | |
| | <p><u>River Lark Pollution Action Plan</u></p> <p>AH explained Mariana Sandifer, an environmental science student, would spend 2 months studying Lark data for her project and that SH would circulate her project proposal.</p> | SH |

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| | <p>Chalk Stream Round Table Attendees noted RLCP and stakeholders would be meeting Jo Churchill MP on 13 May and that Jo Churchill had helped the RLCP focus on pollution issues and had raised the RLCP's visibility.</p> <p>AH highlighted the following achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglian Water would continue to remove more phosphate than its permit required, even though they would be penalised for it. • There had been no raw sewage overflow from Fornham STW in 2021. • Citizen Science had started and was well underway. • There were proposals to reduce the phosphate level further at Fornham STW, but there was uncertainty on how this could be achieved given the current WINEP (Water Industry Environment Programme) rules. • Major objectives concerning agricultural pollution and amelioration through sensitive farming still needed to be reached. <p>Attendees noted there were 2 reports on the RLCP website; Catchment Appraisal and the River Lark Pollution Action Plan</p> | |
| 9 | RLCP ORGANISATION | |
| | <p>AH said the RLCP needed volunteers to help with supporting roles and asked for volunteers to be Trustees.</p> <p>Sponsor initiative – AH explained the RLCP was looking for businesses in Bury St Edmunds and Mildenhall areas to sponsor the RLCP ensuring a funding stream that was not ring-fenced. AH asked attendees to contact SH or AH with any ideas.</p> <p>CC asked if there was any literature that could be sent to potential sponsors?</p> <p>AH replied SH had created a flyer which could accompany a letter and the RLCP was discussing providing information on the website. AH said once information was on the website the RLCP could move to the next stage and write letters to potential sponsors.</p> | |
| 10 | NEXT MEETINGS | |
| | AGM Thursday 5th May 2022, 5.30pm; Thursday 16th June 2022, 5.30pm; Thursday 15th September 2022, 5.30pm; Thursday 17 November 2022, 5.30pm | |
| 11 | AOB | |
| | <u>Item 1</u> | |

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| | <p>AH explained a new development consisting of 1,250 houses on the east and west sides of the river Lark south of Dobbies garden centre called Abbots Vale was due to start in October 2022.</p> <p>AH asked CCr to look at the plans for the development together with Richard Counihan of BWMG and to report back to the RLCP. AH said the BWMG hoped to monitor the river Lark before, during and after the development. BWMG and RLCP should be working to keep the river as natural as possible.</p> <p>AW explained a planning condition for this development during initial planning stage had been that river restoration works needed to be carried out.</p> <p>AW agreed to meet with CCr and Richard Counihan to discuss this further.</p> <p>CCr raised the possibility of developers seeking to build close to the river Lark in the old St James's school site.</p> | AW/CCr/RC |
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The meeting ended at 7.12 pm

ACTION LOG

| AGENDA ITEM | ACTION | BY WHOM |
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| 3 | SH said removing the weir would improve the flow and offered to put CCr in touch with GS. | SH |
| 8 | SH would circulate environmental science student's project proposal. | SH |
| 11 | AW agreed to meet with CCr and Richard Counihan to discuss this further. | AW/CG/RC |