



RIVER LARK CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of RLCP meeting held virtually on 16 June 2022 at 5.30pm

Present: Caroline Chamberlain –RLCP Trustee (CC)
 Christopher Cross – BWMG (CCr)
 Nigel Elbourne – RLCP Mildenhall Representative (NE)
 Bob Gooch – (BG)
 Andrew Hinchley – RLCP Trustee and Chair (AH)
 Steph Holland – RLCP Admin and Volunteer (SH)
 Jessie Leach – Rivers Trust and Cameo (JL) – part of meeting
 Gary Quilter – West Suffolk Council Open Spaces (GQ)
 Libby Ranzetta – BWMG, Chalk Aquifer Alliance (LR) – part of meeting
 Jim Stephens – Trustee, RLCP Treasurer (JS) – part of meeting
 Richard Summers – Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership (RS) – part of meeting

In attendance: Alex Huggins - Minutes

1	APOLOGIES	ACTION
	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Ray Godwin, Alice Wickman, Graham Showell, David and Marion Fisher, Bill Sutherland, Nicola Crockford and Sam Westwood.</p>	
2	MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF RLCP MEETING OF 21 APRIL 2022 (RLCP 2022-8)	
	<p>Minutes from RLCP Meeting of 21 April 2022 were confirmed by attendees who had been present for that meeting.</p> <p><u>Matters arising:</u></p> <p>3 <i>Weir downstream of Tollgate, BSE:</i> SH said removing the weir would improve the flow and offered to put CCr in touch with GS. Attendees noted the weir removal was the responsibility of the EA and would be managed by James Dyke. The RLCP was in favour of structures being removed and for restoration work to improve natural river flow being put in place, but should individuals wish to contact EA citing the importance of maintaining the weir they would be happy to put them in touch with the EA. CCr said he was happy to let the matter rest. Done.</p> <p>8 <i>SH would circulate environmental science student Mariana Sandifer's project proposal.</i> Ongoing</p> <p>11 <i>Abbots Vale development: AW agreed to meet with CCr and Richard Counihan to discuss this further.</i> Attendees noted this would be discussed under an agenda item later in the meeting. Done.</p>	

9	PLANNING – West Suffolk Plan	
	This item was taken first as LR and JS had to leave the meeting by 6.20pm	
	<p>AH presented slides of the ‘Green Infrastructure Document’ (RLCP 2022-12) and said feedback comments were needed by the end of July. JS drew attendees’ attention to the 2 maps ‘Landscape Character Types’ and ‘National Character Areas’ and pointed out the chalk borne stream was in Bury St Edmunds and downstream of BSE whilst the upland river Lark tributaries were in clay and BSE sat on the boundary of clay and the Brecks.</p> <p>AH highlighted the following: It was fantastic that the river Lark was being recommended to Officers as the number one priority environmental action for the local council for the next 15 years or so of the West Suffolk Plan.</p> <p>RLCP had submitted a proposal to protect 800 acres of riparian green space and that the detail of this work should be requested to be fully accessible through inclusion of all the submitted maps in policy documents going forward.</p> <p>Recommended next steps mentioned ‘to establish a partnership working group with stakeholders along the river corridor’ including RLCP, but the document did not list RLCP as a possible delivery partner for any projects.</p> <p>AH asked JL if she knew what a ‘delivery partner’ meant, as RLCP had not been listed as a delivery partner? JL said a delivery partner was often part of the framework and then chosen to receive funds and deliver part of the project and suggested the RLCP ask for the definition and if RLCP met the criteria, then inform planners they wished to be also categorised as a delivery partner.</p> <p>AH suggested that any RLCP response should document all RLCP restoration work completed so as to give a better picture of what had been achieved.</p> <p>AH asked for comments. LR said it looked like a desk exercise and it was a case of making sure the planning officers knew what the RLCP was doing and what it could do. AH informed attendees he and SH were making of list of what the RLCP was doing for a call with planners the following Tuesday. GQ agreed the RLCP needed to put its views to the planners.</p> <p>JS noted the RLCP had always stressed the importance of the catchment approach and that catchment issues should be addressed strategically and that it was not confident this was recognised in this draft document.</p> <p>AH said he would circulate the Green Infrastructure document. AH said he would represent RLCP online at the planning meeting and asked if anybody wished him to make any specific representations to please let him know.</p> <p><i>LR left meeting</i> [Note Further discussion on Agenda item 9 is documented later in the Minutes]</p>	AH
3	RIVER ACTIVITY ECOLOGY, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION (GS)	
	<u>River Restoration Work parties – (EA/BFER supported)</u> GS provided a report and SH updated as follows:	
	<u>Plans for downstream of Tollgate BSE</u>	
	Not much had happened since the last meeting as it was bird nesting season. JS reported RLCP was planning next steps with the EA for 6 months between October	

	<p>2022 and April 2023 and the focus was the river Lark between Tollgate and the Suffolk golf course.</p> <p>AH and SH were organising landowner permissions and GS was sorting permits the following week.</p> <p>GS was hoping to introduce natural features and pre- and post-work monitoring would be carried out.</p>	
	<u>Himalayan Balsam (HB) plans</u>	
	<p>SH reported HB pulling was underway with surveying taking place in the last 2 weeks and BWMG had provided updates. HB pulling had taken place between BSE and Tollgate bridge. The Emersons had surveyed HB from Fornham to Hengrave. Reports said there was less HB than last year, but still lots. AH added people were using iRecord and producing GIS maps of all HB detected and removed and this provided evidence that these efforts were making a difference. SH said she would be contacting volunteers the following week to organise HB pulling parties.</p>	
	<u>Riverside Sign installation</u> (SH)	
	<p>SH reported there was now a RLCP- designed information sign at Fullers Mill and 3 more signs had been commissioned; one for Flempton Bridge and two for West Stow with the first being installed the following week.</p> <p>JS congratulated SH on this work.</p> <p><i>JS left the meeting</i></p>	
4	CITIZEN SCIENCE DEVELOPMENT	
	<p><u>General Update</u> (SH)</p> <p>Tributary source/confluence sampling had taken place on 7 May. Results were preliminary and the project was growing organically. They may liaise with the National Trust and work on the river Linnet, whose source was in Chedburgh.</p> <p>SH shared slides of sampling results.</p>	
	<p><u>GIS update</u> (AS)</p> <p>Anna Saltmarsh was not present.</p>	
	<p>Longer term (AH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National citizen science project (CaSTCo) JL reported there was no update on this project to date. JL explained CaSTCo was a catchment systems thinking cooperative that would acquire data using citizen science. It was a transformation project to achieve systems change. The Anglian region was a demonstrator region and the river Lark and river Wensum pockets would be the first targeted with sites being monitored and GIS information recorded. JL said the RLCP was exciting because of its data and volunteer base. The data would be sent to experts and reported back to the RLCP. The delay was due to trying to get 24 partners to agree on the scope and JL said she would keep RLCP updated. <p>AH thanked JL.</p>	
5	OTHER VOLUNTEER UPDATES (SH)	
	<p>Attendees noted a summer social event was planned for 20 August 2022 and SH asked for suggestions for what format and for help in planning it.</p>	RLCP members

6	NATIONAL FLAGSHIP STATUS (AH)	
	<p>The Anglian Water Natural Capital Consultancy Study which had been the first element of the Lark flagship project would now be extended to cover the lark sub-catchments not addressed in the initial study.</p> <p>AH shared a slideshow and explained the national project was moving forward slowly. AH highlighted the following for the Lark project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Rivers Trust was the prime contractor but river volunteers would be invited to implement restoration work where appropriate • River Lark downstream from BSE was one of six priority catchments identified in the study. • The study does not explicitly mention the large Abbots Vale development straddling the Lark. • The next stage will be to move from the desk study proposals to real projects. • Funding needed to be approved by a national policy group. <p>AH asked for volunteers willing to read the 50 pages and informed attendees that Mariana would be taking special interest in CaSTCo.</p> <p>AH reported implementation would be in 2025 and Robin Price, Director of Environment for Anglian Water (AW) would be available to discuss this at the summer social.</p>	
7	CamEO	
	Update on conference – the online conference had taken place on 18 May and AH and SH would check dates for the Autumn conference. Video recordings would be available as/when resource can be found to create them.	AH and SH
8	POLLUTION GROUP UPDATE (SH)	
	<p><u>General Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the discussion at the last meeting had been on tributaries. • Water quality monitoring had been reported on under item 4. • Sewage permits – Mariana Sandifer had gone through data and was looking at mapping it. • Work had been done with West Suffolk College so they could introduce water quality sampling to their curriculum. • Mariana was looking at temperature results and would present her project at the end of the year • The group would meet again in another 2 months. <p><i>Gary Quilter left the meeting</i></p>	
	<p><u>River Lark Pollution Action Plan/Chalk Stream Round Table (AH)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chalk Stream Round Table had met with Jo Churchill MP but the action plan was no further on in reducing phosphate levels at West Stow. • AW want to encourage a new focus on reducing agricultural pollution. • AH drew attendees to the website of the Sustainable Food Trust: sustainablefoodtrust.org – and in particular to their plan for a sustainable farming system which aimed to reduce water pollution. • AH said AW would meet with Jo Churchill to update her on the Flagship project. 	

9	PLANNING	
	<p>West Suffolk Plan – closing date for comments on important first documents.</p> <p><i>RS joined the meeting</i> AH provided a brief recap of the main reactions to the Green Infrastructure Document as outlined at the beginning of the meeting.</p> <p>RS said a reminder from the RLCP was all that was needed to ensure they were included in the document as a delivery partner. AH reported the Council would be visiting BSE market place on Wednesday 29 June from 9am to 4pm with this document and RS suggested two to three RLCP members attend with comments.</p> <p>RS reported the Bury Society had requested a presentation to members from Anne Marie Howe and said he would suggest to the Bury Society that they also invite the RLCP, the BWMG and the Heritage Partnership to that meeting as interests overlapped.</p> <p>RS reported he had met with Marie Smith, Head of Planning, and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She had reassured him we have a strong local plan for the future which was very encouraging. • The merger of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury meant BSE had benefitted from surplus sites in Forest Heath so there was less impact on BSE than otherwise might have been. • The two extra developments (Rougham airfield and extension of Abbots Vale up to A14 towards Blaxhall) would pick up 1000 new homes which constituted a large part of housing and employment needs for the area resulting in less impact on the environment than previously thought. • The new A14 bypass was not going to happen for a while as the A14 would not now reach capacity at 2030 as originally planned <p>RS also highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green Infrastructure Study was an advisory document not yet strategy, so RLCP could make any recommendations they wished at this stage. <p>RS concerns were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sites for local green space such as the Abbey Gardens, had been missed out, and RS suggested RLCP list the sites again. • The GIS study did not include hydrology of the whole river catchment and JS needed to visit them at the market and ask why it had been missed out. • Local plan – Abbey of St Edmund area. The Heritage Partnership had recommended the whole area be designated as an action area and they would be grateful for RLCP support for this. 	
	<p><u>Abbots Vale</u> AH suggested Abbots Vale be discussed outside the meeting with anyone who wished to be involved. RS suggested looking at each specific document and to report if any were out of date. RS also suggested once BWMG and SWT had looked at mitigation they then contact local planning to discuss this so local planning knew BWMG and SWT were aware of the development and wanted to contribute in a positive way. CCr agreed to take this back to BWMG. Caroline Chamberlain (CC) said she would also be involved with the Abbots Vale discussion, together with AH and JS. AH thanked CC.</p>	<p>CCr</p> <p>CC</p>

10	ABBEY OF ST EDMUND HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP (RS)	
	<p>RS highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership was working on a funding application to the National Lottery for £6.5 million. • The Partnership was working productively with English Heritage on heritage interpretation resulting in 12 panels being made and installed in time for the picnic in the park on 15 July and they were hoping for a phase 2 in further flung parts. 	
11	AOB	
	None was tabled	
12	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	<p>Thursday September 15 at 5.30pm; Thursday November 17 at 5.30pm.</p> <p>Based on a quick poll there seemed a need to make the September meeting both face-to-face and virtual</p>	

The meeting ended at 7.50pm

ACTION LOG

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM
5	Attendees noted a summer social event was planned for 20 August 2022 and SH asked for suggestions for what format and for help in planning it.	RLCP members/vols
7	AH and SH would check dates for the Autumn CamEO conference.	AH and SH
9	RS also suggested once BWMG and SWT had looked at mitigation they then contact local planning to discuss this so local planning knew BWMG and SWT were aware of the development and wanted to contribute in a positive way. CCr agreed to take this back to BWMG	CCr
9	Caroline Chamberlain (CC) said she would also be involved with the Abbots Vale discussion, together with AH and JS	CC
9	AH to circulate Green Infrastructure document	AH