

Arun Valley Vision Group

The White Swan, Arundel 20th November 2019

Present:

Tania Hunt (TH, SDNPA Minute Taker), Derek Waller (DW, Arundel TC), Matt Jackson (MJ, WSCC), Adrian Waller (AW, Amberley landowners), Russel Long (RL, EA), Claire Francis (CF, EA) Julianne Evans (JE, RSPB), Sammy Read (SR, NE)

Apologies:

Jeremy Burgess (JB, SDNPA), Peter Knight (PK), Kate Rice (KR, SW), Sue Beale (SB, NE), John Archer (JA, ARRT), Roger Spencer (RS, Arun DC), Tom Ormesher (TO, NFU)

KEY POINTS

1. Introduction:

Unfortunately, due to illness our chair (Jeremy Burgess) is absent from the meeting. Therefore, the agenda was followed loosely by Derek Waller and Tania Hunt.

2. Updates and discussion on the pilot project development and longer term arrangements:

TO and AW have been in touch with advisors from the NFU and discussed the structure of a limited company and have forwarded the details to JB. It does not seem to be a problem to set one up.

AW had a meeting with local landowners and it was reported that they had reservations, yet would support the idea and quoted from landowners that “as long as I am left alone to do what I want, I will support”. The meeting was overall positive and they were quickly coming up with ideas and had a lot of enthusiasm.

The next step would be to broaden communications with landowners and get them ‘on board’ with the idea.

PK wanted to put forward the importance of getting the landowners on board, if not there is no progress.

AW – I would agree

SR- what are you hoping that landowners will do?

AW- whatever the landowners and the group decide. For example, there is a problem with flooding outside of Bury School. It could be something that is discussed with landowners and addressed that way.

SR – we offer specialist advice and we introduce Natural Flood Management. Therefore, if landowners would like advice – put them in touch with me and we can help. We are part of NE and EA and funded by Defra. We engage with Farmers on sensitive issues that open up to Natural Flood Management.

MJ – perhaps get a pool of community ideas and then talk to the relevant people that can help.

JE- how are we going to move the project forward?

AW – we work with landowners; then Parish Councils; then form a company; ideas start to come forward and then decide what is achievable.

3. Arun Valley SAC/SPA site improvement plan

SUI Implementation

SU3 Investigations

AW - IDB digger stopped at the A29 and did not go further upstream. There has been no

major work for years.

DW – that could be a good area for the pilot study?

AW – floodplain is restricted by land either side. A29 is impassable at Pulborough.

DW – any work on SU1 that would help further down?

RL – 2 Properties would have impact.

DW – SU1 would be a way in to wider issue.

AW – sea level rise is not something that will impact on us in the short term. Weather systems are what will affect us. If we had a weather system come over us like they have up north, we would be in a similar situation to them.

RL – there is a need for community pressure. It is very easy to make assumptions.

Community activity help to drive change.

AW – start with landowners and parish councils and then get community engaged. It would be interesting to look at flood maps and see where the benefit will be gained. That is a good place to start with the community.

CF – how to work together and take forward this idea?

RL – EA have sanctioned IDB work programmed for next year. The work that is done needs to meet landowners needs. We have £60,000/ £30,000 per year and it is up for debate what this money is spend on. Until it is abolished we are committed to spend this money.

CB – Jonathan Chowen – Environment Lead for Horsham would be a good person to get on board.

ACTION: CB/JB – to arrange visit to Horsham to visit Jonathan Chowen

CF – SU3 – Paused early. There is a gap in the investigation at this point in time to see where this group is going. Work at this time will continue at this moment, but will review. First phase completed. Moving forward would depend on what the plan would be.

JE – do we need to come to you with questions? What data do we need to be collected?

MJ – tailored environmental objectives, purpose and why it was done.

JE – pilot project – we need to see where the gaps are and get questioned answered.

There was a discussion about LTRAS and the data being collected and it being out of date data. The EA have not investigated in Amberley for 15 years.

The EA responded with the fact that they are not using the data to make decisions. Part of the projects and consideration of adaptive management. Part of being in the group is to create actions as part of that process.

LTRAS has been stalled data on area and the EA are open to the challenge. They have stalled the withdrawal if maintenance in the Arun Valley. To move forward there needs to be a huge injection of funding, which the EA are not confident of getting due to the lack of supporting evidence. LTRAS – is there evidence to support the next step to look at adaptive management. AW reported that the aims and objectives of LTRAS is challenging. The EA felt that funding needs to support Flood Risk Management/ Asset Management needs to be supported and consistent. Not spending money costs money. Our primary aim is to husband resources – legal implications and flood risk implications. There is a process of general withdrawal across the country. The EA is an evidence based organisation and when challenged we look at things in an informed way. The economic view of LTRAS has not been completed. The process of getting there and the EA playing their part – where it moved to a better place. Take adaptive management on board from the group and go forward with that.

AW asked the question to the EA regarding water management at Amberley and if it was going ahead. The EA responded with; whatever is happening the EA is taking on. LTRAS has been paused and the EA will come back with current thought. JE asked if there is a water level management plan and the EA responded that progress has been made, so wait and see what happens.