

Arun Valley Vision Steering Group - Meeting Notes

Wednesday 15 March 2017 – 10.00 to 12.30
The White Swan, 16 Chichester Road, Arundel, BN18 0AD

Attendees

Dr John Godfrey (Chair)
Gill Farquharson (Chair)
Sara Denton (AVVG Project Officer) – Environment Agency
Jayne Field – Natural England
Jeremy Burgess – South Downs National Park Authority
Joss Carter – Environment Agency
John Archer – Arun and Rother Rivers Trust
Kate Rice – Southern Water
Derek Waller – representing Duke of Norfolk Estate
Tom Ormesher – NFU
Matt Jackson - WSCC
Roger Spencer – Arun District Council
Adrian Waller – Amberley Landowners
Matthew Woodcock – Forestry Services
Anne Harriott – Arundel Town Council
Graeme Lyons - Sussex Wildlife Trust
Claire Kerr - RSPB

Guest Speaker – Nick Heasman, South Downs National Park Authority

Apologies

Tony Whitbread – Sussex Wildlife Trust
Peter Knight – Duke of Norfolk Estate
Martin Brightwell – Horsham District Council

Welcome and Introduction to the Meeting

1. Welcome to the meeting from Dr John Godfrey and Gill Farquharson who have agreed to co-chair the Arun Valley Vision Group for the next 2 years. Sara Denton from the Environment will undertake the role of Project Officer and will be the main point of contact for the project. Sara.denton@environmet-agency.gov.uk or 07557190705
2. Introduction and welcome to all members of the steering group (See attendee list above).
3. Dr John Godfrey expressed his disappointment to the group that a representative from Horsham District Council was not in attendance but stressed that we are working to get a representative onto the steering group possibly from their Planning Policy Team.
4. Jayne Field, Natural England informed the group that she will be undertaking a 12 month assignment to DEFRA as a Policy Advisor. She will inform the group of the new representative from Natural England when someone has been confirmed.
5. Steering Group agreed the meeting notes from the Arun Valley Conference on 20th January without any amendments.

The South Downs National Park – people, place and passion, a short introduction to its past and present - Nick Heasman

See attached presentation

Terms of Reference and Ways of Working

8. Steering group informed that meeting will take place every six weeks and a timetable of meetings for 2017 will be sent out as part of the meeting notes.
9. A wider stakeholder meeting will be held every 6 months with the first one taking place in September 2017.
10. Derek Waller raised the point that there was no representation from Littlehampton on the group. Dr John Godfrey said he was keen not increase the size of the steering group but agreed that we should engage with representatives from Littlehampton Town Council and Littlehampton Harbour Board.
11. Steering group were asked to review the draft Terms of Reference. The group suggested the following amendments:
 - a. Include a sentence from Derek Waller's presentation about the need to ensure that we find a sensible and affordable balance between the needs of conservation, land management and protection of people and properties against flood risk as time passes.
 - b. Include a sentence about sense of pride and place in the Arun Valley and its special qualities, providing a landscape-wide context for the consideration of flood management issues.
 - c. Include sentences recognising the importance of (i) access and recreation, and (ii) water resources and water quality in the Valley.
12. The steering group members stressed the need to communicate the work and outputs of the project as widely as possible. We will ensure this is done by:
 - a. Launching the Arun Valley Vision Website where all relevant information including meeting notes will be made publicly available.
 - b. Developing a communications and engagement plan to ensure we are communicating/engaging with all groups who may have an interest in participating in developing the vision.
13. Dr John Godfrey suggested that we develop a detailed work plan for the group which will provide structure to our way of working.

Actions and Decisions	Deadline
Sara Denton to contact Littlehampton Town Council and Littlehampton Harbour Board to arrange a meeting to discuss	Action complete
Sara D to amend Terms of Reference and email to all steering group members for final approval.	Action complete
GF to develop a draft communications plan for discussion at next steering group meeting	Next Steering group meeting
SD to develop a detailed draft work plan for the steering group to be discussed at the next meeting.	Next Steering group meeting

Arun IDB

14. The group were asked to discuss whether or not they would like to write an objection to the Minister Dr Terese Coffey following the publication of the draft order to abolish the Arun IDB in the London Gazette on 6th March 2017. Objections need to be submitted by 5th April deadline.

The following comments were made:

- Derek Waller felt that, following a conversation with Nick Herbert MP, there was no point making an objection to the draft order.
- Claire Kerr, RSPB felt there was the need to make a response. The abolition of the Arun IDB would leave a vacuum with no idea of what would come next which has significant implications for the landowners.
- Adrian Waller felt that the abolition of the Arun IDB removes a co-ordinated approach to maintenance and its funding. Any new IDB that was established would not necessarily have to be run in the same way as the existing one. Natural England and Arun District Council felt they could not be seen to be objecting to the draft order.

15. The Steering group made a decision *note* to write a formal objection to the draft order to abolish the Arun IDB.

Post meeting note – The Co-chairs attended a meeting on 22nd March 2017 chaired by the NFU. Issues raised at the meeting regarding the timing of the decision to abolish the Arun IDB whilst a vision is being developed has led the Co-chairs to write directly to Dr Therese Coffey to express their concerns.

16. The steering group raised the question regarding whether development of a new IDB should be a work-stream.

- a. Roger Spencer (Arun District Council) informed the group that they have committed the funding used for the Arun IDB to fund a new post for a Drainage Officer.
- b. Adrian Waller suggested there could be a water management organisation which is collaborative, such as a Water Level Management Board.
- c. Tom Ormesher (NFU) informed the group that they are currently working with a firm of solicitors who are exploring what new legal entity could be established to deliver ongoing management in the Arun Valley.
- d. The members of the steering group agreed that the IDB is a major work-stream as part of the Arun Vision and that this should be led by the NFU as part of the ongoing work they are undertaking. Agreed that Tom Ormesher will develop the agenda for the 31st May Steering Group Meeting to feed back what alternatives could be put in place.

Actions and Decisions	
Steering Group decided not to formally object to the draft order to abolish the Arun IDB. <i>Post Meeting – Based on discussion at a separate meeting about the IDB the Co-chairs have decided to write to Therese Coffey to express their concerns about the timing of the abolition in light of the Arun Vision project.</i>	
Tom Ormesher to develop the agenda for the Steering Group Meeting on 31 st May to feedback what potential alternative options there could be for continued maintenance in the Arun Valley.	

Issues and Opportunities Workshop

See attached workshop outputs

Dates of future meetings 2017

26th April 2017

31st May 2017

12 July 2017

6th September 2017

25th October 2017

6th December 2017