

Arun Valley Vision Group

Lifesize Virtual Meeting 29th July 2020

Present: Jeremy Burgess (JB, SDNPA), Tania Hunt (TH, SDNPA Minute Taker), Charlie Baker (CB, ARRT), Adrian Waller (AW, Amberley landowners), Claire Francis (CF, EA) Julianne Evans (JE, RSPB), Sue Beale (SB, NE), Gillian Branson (GB, AWSCP), Roger Spencer (RS, Arun DC)

Apologies:

Derek Waller (DW, Arundel TC), Kate Rice (KR, SW).

KEY POINTS

1. Introduction:

JB welcomed everyone to the meeting and mentioned that it had been a long time since we had last been able to get together due to Covid19 and how he thought that a virtual meeting was a good opportunity for the group to all to catch up.

2. Condition assessments of designated sites:

SB provided an update. Natural England (NE) are trying to run a full condition assessment of the sites along the Arun Valley and are currently working through data.

NE now have funding for water quality assessments, this will be utilised to buy some WQ equipment and set out a protocol. NE are seeking assistance from RSPB, SWT and other landowners to undertake monitoring and will be doing monthly checks for at least a year and could potentially continue after this time. The plan was to start work before now, however this has been delayed due to Covid19. Therefore, the work is looking to commence September/ October 2020 for one year.

AW put forward that the Amberley Landowners would do all that they can to help with the project.

SB also highlighted that a new water advisor Hazel Stanworth, has just started work for NE. Hazel is an experienced water advisor, which is a great additional resource to be added to the project.

AW also wanted to add that one thing that has led from the winter flooding is a huge decrease of production on the water meadows leading to big losses locally, which has had a huge impact on agriculture in the valley. SB put forward that it would be a good idea for the Catchment Sensitive Farm Officer and Hazel Stanworth to link up and talk through these issues.

ACTION: SB to contact JE from RSPB and Sussex Wildlife Trust separately to talk through working together on this project.

ACTION: SB to have a separate conversation with CB about equipment.

ACTION: SB will put Hazel Stanworth in touch with AW to discuss and arrange a meeting.

ACTION: Everyone; any other parties interested in the NE WQ monitoring project to get in touch.

3. IDB Planned works and future management

There was discussion around the decision of EA and the Minister to withdraw the order to dissolve the IDB, the current work programme and priorities going forward.

JE Highlighted that Teresa wanted people to come forward as an advisory role to the IDB?

RS Highlighted the issue of funding and that ADC are fully committed to the IDB. where seems to be a change to the program will there be a re-consultation of what will happen? It was noted that he was keen that Mid-Sussex DC should also have some financial involvement.

AW discussed that he had been in a few discussions with Russel Long (EA) regarding the IDB. Landowners have asked what needs to be done. Landowners have put this forward. For example; Castle Brooks ditches should continue to be drained. The answers are very slow to be returned. There are maps of work to be done but no feedback on what is happening this year. Russel Long is looking at pulling the IDB but is not sure who owes money for the IDB and there are bills, so lots to put in order beforehand.

JE if the IDB is not going to be abolished, it's not very clear what the next steps are?

AW the IDB will remain. The EA are instructed to withdraw and a locally constructed IDB will be formulated with a local board to continue works. The EA are currently looking into what is possible.

GB reported that she is currently updating the Catchment Management Plan for ARRT and it would be good to work together with the EA and give some structure to this to see where the opportunities and limitations are.

CF- Agreed to take comments back to Russell Long and Teresa Willway who are leading on this issue.

The EA are talking through with DEFRA as to what will happen next. The EA are formulating a plan and gathering evidence for a way forward and are keen to involve those most affected by the IDB decision and also work with this group. DEFRA want to hear what the next steps will be. This will allow for a consultation and once the EA know more, can report back to the group.

ACTION: CF and GB to arrange to discuss working together.

ACTION: CF to feedback to Russell and Teresa and seek an update for the group

4. Updates on communication and adaptive management

AW informed that GB that during the lockdown period he had been in

communication with land managers to identify any damage to flood walls following the recent flooding. He has collated photographs from land managers and forwarded these to the EA for consideration in the regular maintenance programme.

5. Organisational updates

JB notified the group that there have been early discussions in regard to a second phase of the Rampion offshore windfarm, the cables from which could potentially come ashore near Littlehampton and then be taken up the Arun Valley. At present they are scoping options but JB will update the group when more details are available.

6. AOB

None

7. Next meeting

JB thanked everyone for attending and expressed a wish for the next meeting to either be in a large room where the group can socially distance, or on another platform as some members of the group had experience problems with logging on.