

Arun Valley Vision Group

The White Swan, Arundel 21st January 2020

Present:

Jeremy Burgess (JB, SDNPA), Tania Hunt (TH, SDNPA Minute Taker), Derek Waller (DW, Arundel TC), Jane Willmott (JW, SWT), Adrian Waller (AW, Amberley landowners), Sue Beale (SB, NE), John Spence (JS, Arun & Western Streams Catchment Partnership), Nic Burchell (NB, On behalf of Sir Brian Barttelot), Martin Brightwell (MB, HDC), Charlie Baker (CB, ARRT), Russel Long (RL, EA),

Apologies:

Matt Jackson (MJ, WSCC), Kate Rice (KR, SW), Tom Ormesher (NFU), Henri Brocklebank (SWT), Julianne Evans (RSPB)

KEY POINTS

1. Introduction:

A. Apologies received as noted above.

B. A.O.B

DW suggested that that Southern Water's 50 year plan as an agenda item for the next meeting

DW suggested that NFU present the new Agricultural Bill as an agenda item for next time.

C. **ACTION:** *TH to send out minutes from the last meeting*

2. Arun Valley SAC/SPA Site Improvement Plan:

SB gave an update on the current position with the Site Improvement plan and potential revision.

The Improvement Plan currently has no funding so needs to be linked to actions by others, not a lot of progress currently.

The issues:

Inappropriate Water Levels

- Focus on Countryside Stewardship
- Working with landowners to try and come up with solutions
- Good time for EA and NE to go through and work together with landowners to revise the water level management plan

Designated Features – Inappropriate Water Levels

- Updating the water level management plan.

Water Pollution

- Largely dealt with through the AMP process

ACTION: *SB to send DW a hard copy of the Improvement Plan, as the previous was too small to read.*

DW – Suggested it would be good to reintroduce meetings with all involved. There is an existing landowner's liaison group in Amberley.

ACTION: *RL – to check to see what groups the EA have set up.*

The EA has put aside money to fund the Water Level Management Plan

ACTION: NE and EA to liaise in regard to updating the Water level management plan

ACTION: JB -To bring up water pollution – Southern Water with Kate Rice at a future meeting

ACTION: JB – To request an update from Southern Water before each meeting and send out to the group.

3.1 Update on IDB

There was a lengthy discussion in regard to the current position regarding the IDB this included issues relating to potential dissolution and funding for current maintenance

AW – RFCC meeting – IDB money had been put aside question as to what this will be spent on and can landowners help to agree a maintenance programme.

AW – If local landowners managed the IDB, changes would happen more quickly - this is not the case and local representatives who know the river are not used. This has created the situation that we are now in. What can be done to help with this?

Action. EA will look at re-establishing landowner liaison as action above.

RL - The River Arun is the only IDB under the EA. The inspector has recommended that the abolition of the IDB not be made. Part of the requirements of the abolition of the IDB is to look at presenting alternatives. Funding will not be increased. Potentially three options, continue with dissolution which will require further evidence and may have a high cost, dedicating areas as main river although there will not be any additional resources for this and it will compete with existing priorities or to maintain the IDB in some form with clear Governance including local representation.

RL unable to provide the accountancy side of the IDB but Clare Francis will be leading on this, providing evidence and helping us to make the best decision going forward.

The Arun Vision Group can help with defining what is needed, what adaptive management could look like and shaping evidence.

3.2 SUI Implementation and SU3 Investigations

EA Update from RL – SUI – the current consultation is on timing – carry on and don't expect too much of an impact.

SU3 – we don't feel that the evidence supports our current position. We need to reduce the cost and it all needs to be costed out on an evidence base. We have had to step back as the pace was causing bad decision making, revisit the process, see what the evidence is and look to see if our objectives are working with adaptive management.

AW – the issue with working with evidence is that the evidence is 10-15 years old and things have changed due to water systems and increased extreme weather.

DW – suggested that the EA reconsider the timescale and NB was in agreement. There concerns were that the SUI community has only just woken up to the situation, or had no awareness at all, which was agreed by AW. There are people with concerns that the river has changed and suggested extending to the end of February.

RL agreed that he could not see a reason why the EA could not extend, but would need to check with Theresa as things may be further along than he realised.

ACTION: RL to clarify a period of extension of the consultation with Theresa and come back to the group.

3. Winter flooding in Pulborough, causes, consequences, and any lessons to be learnt for the Arun Vision

AW – 19th / 20th December we had a major rainfall event. The surface water could not enter the river and pumps were unable to cope leading to flooding of properties near Swan Bridge and closure of the A29.

RL- The surface water was not reaching the pumps some of the issue may have been down to blocked drains looked after by Highways. The EA came out and cleared the water and drains, partly on behalf of the Highways Authority, due to it being late on Christmas Eve and the risk to more housing.

There is an issue with the inspection as some assets were not working.

RL. EA do have an asset inspection programme – I did instruct the team leader in that area. We did act outside our remit and cleared the drains that are under HA to clear the water. The issue is working out what drainage is working with what. Flood and HA water – what is EA responsibility and how much is HA? Going forward there needs to be a clarity over maintenance and overall responsibility for the flood risk.

AW- The EA did not pump the houses out soon enough. Nothing happened for at least 2 days. It was a busy time of year and road closed signs were left up unnecessarily and thousands of pounds were lost in lost income during that period.

RL – Road closures were put in by Highways and are a health and safety matter.

Action. EA to Liaise with WSCC (LLFA). There is a need for better communication and maintenance.

RL –At this time, all I can do is make sure that I am in a better position next year.

4. Update the pilot project development and any support required.

AW and TO will come back to the group. Currently we are going up and down to the landowners so that we have a database of contacts and then we will come back and create a document.

5. Recap/ Actions

ACTION: TH to send out minutes from the last meeting

ACTION: SB to send DW a hard copy of the Improvement Plan, as the previous was too small to read.

ACTION: RL – to check to see what groups the EA have set up.

ACTION: JB -To bring up water pollution – Southern Water with Kate Rice at a future meeting and to request an update from Southern Water before each meeting and send out to the group.

ACTION: RL to liaise with WSCC re Pulborough flood management –

ACTION: RL to clarify extension of consultation with Theresa and come back to the group.

ACTION: DW – Southern Water & New Agricultural Bill to be added to Agenda for AOB

ACTION: John Spence – 12 Recommendations in the report for 10 minutes – to discuss where we are in the next meeting.

6. Next Meeting

Next meeting: 18th March 10-12