

Arun Valley Vision Steering Group - Meeting Notes

Wednesday 26th April 2017 – 14.00 to 16.30

The White Swan, 16 Chichester Road, Arundel, BN18 0AD

Attendees

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

Apologies

Kristoffer Hewitt – Natural England
Anne Harriott – Arundel Town Council
Kate Rice – Southern Water
Tony Whitbread – Sussex Wildlife Trust

Welcome and Introduction to the Meeting

1. Introduction and welcome to all members of the steering group (See attendee list above).
2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting were agreed by members of the steering group.
3. Sara Denton informed the group that she had emailed both Littlehampton Town Council and Littlehampton Harbour Board but had yet to receive a response. Roger Spencer said he had a contact within Littlehampton Harbour Board

Actions and Decisions	Deadline
Roger Spencer to contact Littlehampton Harbour Board regarding the Arun Valley Vision Project. <i>Post Meeting Note – Following contact from Roger a meeting has been scheduled with Billy Johnson, Harbour Master for 10th May to discuss the project.</i>	Action complete

Communications Plan- see attached presentation

4. Gill Farquharson outlined her communications strategy to the steering group. The key points were:
 - a. To develop 3 databases for communicating with key audiences - 1. Steering Group 2. Wider Stakeholder Group and 3. Key Influences. A request to the steering group was made to help populate these databases particularly with key press/media contacts and in-house communications contacts who could help cascade key information.

- b. There is no intention to use social media (Facebook, Twitter) by the group at this time.
5. Tom Ormesher raised the question of how we ensure information about the Arun Valley Vision Group is made as widely available to interested parties as possible. The group were informed the group that the website had been developed for this purpose. Claire Kerr suggested developing a poster or visual which could be displayed at key locations such as village halls and Pulborough Brookes directing people to the website for further information. This is something we will explore at a later date.
6. Derek Waller asked what contact had been made with Horsham District Council since the last meeting. Dr John Godfrey informed the group that an email had been sent to Tom Crowley, Chief Executive of Horsham District Council from the Co-chairs outlining how important it is to have a representative from the Council on the Steering Group. We have yet to receive a response to this email.
7. Sara Denton informed the group that Martin Brightwell from Horsham District Council is still on the circulation list for the steering group but has declined to attend all meetings due to resource implications.
8. Claire Kerr, RSPB informed the group that Horsham District Council are currently developing a Tourism Strategy and this could be another avenue to engage with them if the right contacts could be identified.
9. Dr John Godfrey suggested emailing Tom Crowley again to request a meeting to discuss representation on the Arun Valley Vision Steering Group from Horsham District Council.
10. Roger Spencer, Arun District Council suggested that Chichester District Council should also be informed with the project.
11. Gill Farquharson presented the draft website to the members of the steering group for approval. The following suggestions/amendments were agreed prior to the site going live:
 - a. Remove the dates of the meetings from the meeting notes section.
 - b. Request to steering group members to help populate the papers section of the website particularly with exemplar local and national case studies
 - c. Include a statement on the website which states that we are considering the impacts from the whole catchment but our focus area is the Lower Arun.
 - d. Remove the contact tab completely.

Actions and Decisions	Deadline
Sara Denton to email all steering group members to request contacts to populate databases.	12 May 2017
Sara Denton to email Tom Crowley to request a meeting with Dr John Godfrey and Gill Farquharson. <i>Post meeting note – Tom Ormesher has identified a contact from Horsham District Council who has agreed to participate in the steering group.</i>	Action complete
Roger Spencer to email a contact for Chichester District Council to Sara Denton.	Next meeting 31 st May 2017
Sara Denton to make agreed changes to the AVVG website before it goes live.	Action Complete
Sara Denton to send link to the website to all members of the steering group.	12 May 2017

Work Plan

12. John Godfrey made a request to all steering group members to submit a position statement. We currently have position statements from Sussex Wildlife Trust, Arun and Rother Rivers Trust (ARRT) and Arundel Town Council.
13. The group were asked to review the work plan which had been circulated prior to the meeting detailing the themes of the meeting up until the end of 2017.
14. The chairs informed the steering group that each steering group meeting was intended to be themed to ensure that key issues can be explored in detail with members of the steering group leading the discussions.
15. The following themes for the 2017 meeting have been suggested:
 - a. May 31st - Alternative Funding Mechanisms for Maintenance in the Arun Valley
 - b. July 12th - Biodiversity and Conservation
 - c. September 6th – Land Management and Agricultural Policy
 - d. October 25th – Flood Risk and Natural Flood Risk Management
 - e. December 6th – Funding

Post Meeting Note – following the meeting concerns were raised by several members of the steering group regarding the level of understanding of key agency roles and responsibility. It has been agreed that the meeting on May 31st will focus of clarifying what roles and responsibilities West Sussex County Council have as the Lead Local Flood Authority, and the roles and responsibilities of the Environment Agency and Southern Water.

The revised schedule for meeting in 2017 will be as follows:

- a. May 31st - Roles, Responsibilities and Funding Mechanisms*
- b. July 12th - Alternative Funding Mechanisms for Maintenance in the Arun Valley*
- c. September 6th – Biodiversity and Conservation*
- d. October 25th – Land Management and Agricultural Policy*
- e. December 6th - Flood Risk and Natural Flood Risk Management*
- f. 2018 – Funding*

ARRT Position Statement – see attached position statement

16. John Archer outlined the key points of the position statement on behalf of the Arun and Rother Rivers Trust.
17. The following key point were made:
 - g. ARRT is a charity and not a lobbying organisation.
 - h. ARRT have produced a newsletter (which was circulated to steering group members). The Trust also has a website on which they would be happy to put a link to the AVVG website.
 - i. The ARRT Board is made up of the following member:
 - i. Sebastian Anstruther (Chairman)
 - ii. Richard Hammond (Vice Chair)
 - iii. Roger Poole
 - iv. John Spence
 - v. Charlie Baker
 - vi. Dendy Easton
 - vii. Tony Whitbread
 - viii. Dave Brown
 - ix. Martin Willing
 - x. John Whiting
 - xi. Andrew Thompson

- j. The Trust have delivered and been involved in a number of projects since they were established. These include:
 - i. Sediment traps in the Western Rother
 - ii. Research Projects such a SMART and A-STAR
 - iii. The Arun and Rother Connections (ARC) Project
 - iv. Fish passage on the River Ems
- k. Their work has predominantly been focussed on the Western Rother and they are keen to be involved in project delivery in the wider catchment.
- l. Project funding remains an issue for ARRT and they are working to develop a longer term strategy to support more sustainable funding streams.

18. Matt Jackson suggested Operation Watershed funding was available again this financial year with £500k. He suggested that this could be a potential funding source for ARRT.

19. The group suggested that ARRT were well placed to work with communities to support them delivering projects and taking ownership. Making contact with Local Flood Action Groups was suggested. Sara Denton informed the group that she had an upcoming meeting with Jo Higgs, EA Flood Resilience, who work closely with Flood Action groups to identify how we can work with them more effectively.

Actions and Decisions	Deadline
Matt Jackson to send Sara Denton link to Operation Watershed website.	Next meeting 31 st May 2017
Sara Denton to upload map on local flood action groups to AVVG website and circulate the steering group.	12 th May 2017

Arundel Town Council Position Statement – see attached position statement

20. Derek Waller presented his position statement on behalf of Arundel Town Council and stressed that he was representing the paper on behalf of the people and property of Arundel. He encouraged all member of the steering group to read the LTRAS document.

21. The following key point were made:

- m. Due to the risk of tidal, fluvial and surface water flooding in Arundel there is a need for continuing to sustain the “hard” defences along the banks of the River Arun in LTRAS Strategy Unit No. 5.
- n. There are 17 properties at risk in Arundel now and, if nothing is done to improve the defences and assuming that the existing defences are not breached, within 10 to 20 years a total of 168 properties will be at risk, rising to 457 properties within 50 to 100 years.
- o. The solution to Arundel’s flood risk recommended by the EA is to maintain and improve the existing defences, as well as to build some new defence embankments. There is however no need to raise the defences through the town between the bridges.
- p. The EA has recommended that improved and new “hard” defences should be built in and around Arundel over the next 50 years, and stressed that they need to be maintained between now and 100 years hence – all at an estimated (**but** totally **unfunded**) cost of £73m.

22. Derek Waller informed the group that the Low Spot Project to repair the low spots in the earth embankments to the north and south of the town had been completed at a cost of £600k.

23. Adrian Waller suggested to the group that creative solutions need to be sought such as using the spoil from development sites (such as Horsham) to build up the embankments when needed.
24. Peter Knight highlighted the issues with the rail line in SU5 and informed the group that they had recently had a meeting with Network Rail to discuss what could be done particularly in relation to Offham and South Stoke. Network Rail have said they will undertake work at Offham as this represent a significant risk as the line is tight to the embankment. Work at South Stoke will take place at a later date. Sara Denton informed the group that a meeting between Network Rail and the EA was scheduled to take place.
25. Adrian Waller informed the group that Network Rail have issues right throughout the Arun Valley and are continually having to raise the track.
26. Derek Waller informed the group that repairs had been required to the Fitzalan Road Wall at an estimated cost of £3m. Working with Roger Spencer from Arun District Council a solution was identified to extend the life of the wall by decades at a cost of £15k.
27. Members of the steering group suggested that a phased implementation of options across the Valley was a better and more sustainable way to undertake work and that we need to identify other areas where this approach has been undertaken such as on the Humber and Thames (Thames 21 Project).
28. The steering group raised a number of questions regarding how a phased implementation of options would work:
 - q. Who would coordinate and deliver such a strategy?
 - r. What funding would be required?
 - s. What sort of partnership is required to raise revenue?
 - t. Where do Catchment Partnership fit into delivering such a strategy?
29. Matt Jackson, WSCC was asked to provide a statement giving an up to date legal position in terms of their roles a responsibility as the Lead Local Flood Authority.
30. Matt Jackson informed the group that an asset register was publically available detailing what is considered to be a flood risk asset. Also information available through Parish Online which has over 3000 GIS layers. In addition, there is also an asset management document which details the condition of assets into good, fair or bad.
31. The group identified the need to understand funding mechanisms better. Currently a call for bids from NERC. Other funding streams such as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FD GIA) and WEIF (Water Environment Improvement Fund).

Actions and Decisions	Deadline
Sara Denton to make LTRAS document available on the website and to steering group.	Action Complete
Sara Denton to find out what was agreed at Network Rail and EA meeting and to approach Network Rail representative for the steering group.	Next meeting 31 st May 2017
Sara Denton to find examples of where a phased implementation approach has been successful e.g. Thames 21	Next Meeting 31 May 2017
Matt Jackson, WSCC to give an overview of key legislation and the role of LLFA	Next meeting May 31 st 2017
Sara Denton to identify a key contact within NERC to come and talk to the steering group at a future date.	Next Meeting 31 st May 2017

Dates of future meetings 2017

31st May 2017

12 July 2017

6th September 2017

25th October 2017

6th December 2017