



MINUTES OF THE BOURNE SUB CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING

HELD AT VITACRESS SALADS LTD, LOWER LINK FARM, ST MARY BOURNE

MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2014

PRESENT:	Pete Shaw (PS) (Chair)	-	University of Southampton
	Carrie Hutchings (Secretary)	-	Vitacress Conservation Trust
	Henry du Val de Beaulieu	-	Apsley Farms and VCT
	Tom Davis (TD)	-	Test & Itchen Association
	Peter Evans (PE)	-	Advisor
	Rupert Kelton (RK)	-	WCSRT
	Shirley Medgett (SM)	-	Environment Agency
	Clare Read (CR)	-	Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council
	Steve Rothwell (SDR)	-	Vitacress Ltd and VCT
	Bob Wellard	-	Piscatorial Society

1. APOLOGIES

	Bridget Culley (BC)	-	St Mary Bourne Parish Council
	William Daniel (WD)	-	Famous Fishing
	Alison Graham-Smith (AGS)	-	Natural England
	Michael Malyon (MM)	-	Lower Wyke Farm
	Ali Morse (AM)	-	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
	Tim Nevard (TN)	-	VCT
	Gail Taylor	-	University of Southampton

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Sub-Catchment Management Group Meeting held on 15 May 2014 were agreed as a true and fair record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

3.1. Sewer Integrity

ACTION: SM will review timescales and actions of any OFWAT submission regarding sewer integrity for St Mary Bourne.

3.2. Flood Prevention Initiatives

- 3.2.1. The Minutes of the last St Mary Bourne Flood Mitigation meeting had been circulated. It was recognised that the BRI can feed into this Forum and keep updated via BC.

- 3.2.2. RK advised that the Catchment Partnership Group is setting up a formal project to address sediment pathways, working with the Highways Authority and other interested parties.

ACTIONS:

- **The BRI will act as a point of contact for RK and share local knowledge. RK will report back to the next BRI meeting.**
- **RK will update CR on the Catchment Partnership work ahead of her meeting with Steve Woodall (Highways Authority).**
- **CR will raise silt clearance at the next Lengthsman Scheme meeting.**

- 3.3. **Wetland** – Vitacress have appointed Ron Allen to carry out a full review of work / studies undertaken to date for both the top and bottom options. He will report back to the BRI once he has completed this review.

The view was re-iterated that any wetland should be for biodiversity, with overall benefit to aquatic species / habitats and the surroundings. Any water treatments works for Vitacress or solutions to Southern Water's problems are entirely separate issues to be dealt with by each company respectively on the site where they are created.

The impacts of an outline planning application to build 44 houses and a B1 industrial unit on Hirst's site at St Mary Bourne were discussed, bearing in mind the excavation of polluted ground; the need for good drainage; sewage treatment etc. It was agreed that a Section 36 agreement could perhaps help in terms of ensuring drainage is to the correct specification. The Parish Councils and Vitacress will lodge their views with the Council

- 3.4. **Phosphorus Work** – PS outlined the work to date, explaining that prior to 1986 the three main tributaries of the Itchen tracked each other; since that time the Candover and Tichborne have improved but the Arle has deteriorated. Possible influencing factors were cited as dairy closures; housing developments; the cost of phosphate; changes in rules governing the burning of stubble; cress farm ownership and land drainage grants.

ACTION: PS requested anecdotal information on land use, changes in practices etc. on both the Itchen and the Test.

4. **RIVER QUALITY ISSUES**

PS reminded the attendees of the data tabled by PE at the last meeting which highlighted a decline in Gammarus and Serratella. Subsequent to that meeting Rob Murdock has conducted another macro-invertebrate survey and Nigel Stevens has carried out a water management review of Vitacress' practices.

Post Meeting Note: Caged gammarus experiments have also been undertaken.

RM's work also indicates gammarus levels are not as good as previously, although SM questioned the scoring system he had used suggesting different indicator species

within that should be examined. Possible causal factors for the decline were discussed.

Both Vitacress' own investigations and the independent report from Nigel Stevens confirm that the Company has stringent systems in place which are well managed and monitored, but a number of recommendations to improve good practice will be followed up.

SDR explained that the only recent change to farming practice that may impact has been the use of more recycled gravel, with younger material used in recent years having a higher percentage of black sediment. The company has therefore reverted to virgin gravel and is investing in machinery to separate gravel as it is removed from the beds and to separate green material vs rotting it down. HdvdB also highlighted the issue of spoil leachate, recommending that the existing piles be cleaned or disposed of in an environmentally sensitive manner. BW commented on the need to identify scientific value in terms of nutrients it could provide for other industries. The new separator system will be used to extract clean gravel from the spoil and the sediment will wash to settlement tank. HdvdB pointed out that should not then be simply returned to the meadow. SDR agreed and Vitacress will explore alternative local uses for the fertile sediment.

Other silt sources and its content were discussed, with suspicion that high phosphorus levels could be impacting the gammarus. SM highlighted the need to review plant communities first as it is likely to be a secondary response rather than direct.

RK advised there is spare sampling capacity within the Catchment Invertebrate Fingerprinting project and it was agreed to implement this in order to measure on a broader ecological basis.

Consent parameters, particularly in terms of phosphorus levels, were raised. SDR outlined the closed circulation systems being introduced at Vitacress' Pinglestone and Fobdown farms in order to meet the new EA discharging parameters in terms of phosphates. It will take 3-4 years to design, implement and gain sufficient knowledge and expertise of the system before introducing anything similar at St Mary Bourne. With a recirculation method the volume of water used will be lower, hence the importance of a wetland upstream at St Mary Bourne would be less.

ACTIONS:

- **RK will add the Bourne to the invertebrate fingerprinting network and circulate data. SM/RK will co-ordinate collection of samples.**
- **SDR will arrange for current gravel sediment to be analysed.**
- **SDR will ensure that the organic matter from washed gravel is no longer spread on the field.**
- **Opportunities to sell organic green matter to local farmers if loadings**

are low or mixing with dry matter to create an enriched medium for herb growing will be pursued.

- **Gammarus cages will be positioned in all streams and the report circulated once complete.**

5. SOUTHERN WATER / SEWAGE ISSUES – See Matters Arising.

6. FUTURE OF THE BRI AND RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GROUPS

PS reminded the meeting how the BRI Group had been formed out of discussion at an early Chalk Stream Headwaters Forum, with the objective of communicating what is happening at a local level. Acknowledging that a lot of progress has been made over the last seven years, he also observed that within the group there is a plethora of other organisations with overlapping interests in this one aspect and questioned how the BRI should move forward.

Recognising that the Test & Itchen Partnership effectively duplicates the BRI work but on a larger scale, and complements the EA's River Basin Management Plan, it was felt that this would be an ideal forum for both feeding back on T&I projects such as Sediment Pathways to ensure local impact, as well as a way for the BRI to broadcast their activities to a wider audience. TB envisages the replication of groups such as the BRI across the Catchment, but the difficulties of resourcing, financing and maintaining a focussed remit were recognised.

HdvdB highlighted the need to identify projects and find new ways of financing these, e.g. AONB re drainage; internet source funding. PE explained that the Bright Waters Society's objective is to raise funding for research and with greater visibility of results they may contribute more.

PS believes more needs to be done in terms of communication and practical steps identified were:

- **Contact North Hampshire Downs AONB. RK suggested a representative from the BRI should attend their Forum meeting mid October.**
- **Add Catchment Partnership Updates as a standard BRI agenda item**
- **Dedicated pages for the BRI, UII and River Anton on the Catchment Partnership and VCT websites, with one A4 page of meeting highlights**

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 7.1. Road Run-Off and Sediment Traps** - Attendees will share best practice and communicate what is happening at different locations / scales.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

CH will send a Doodle request for week commencing 8 December.