



MINUTES OF THE BOURNE SUB CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING

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

WEDNESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT:	Pete Shaw (PS) (Chair)	-	University of Southampton
	Carrie Hutchings (Secretary)	-	Vitacress Salads Ltd
	Bridget Culley (BC)	-	St Mary Bourne Parish Council
	William Daniel (WD)	-	Famous Fishing
	Tom Davis (TD)	-	Test & Itchen Association
	Peter Evans (PE)	-	Advisor
	Alison Graham-Smith (AGS)	-	Natural England
	Amanda Ingham (AI)	-	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
	Michael Malyon (MM)	-	Lower Wyke Farm
	Shirley Medgett (SM)	-	Environment Agency
	Clare Read (CR)	-	Hurstbourne Priors Parish Council
	Steve Rothwell (SDR)	-	Vitacress Ltd and VCT

1. APOLOGIES

	Henry du Val de Beaulieu	-	Apsley Farms
	Tim Nevard (TN)	-	VCT
	Gail Taylor	-	University of Southampton
	Bob Wellard	-	Piscatorial Society

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Sub-Catchment Management Group Meeting held on 30 April 2013 were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 3.1. **Aquaterra Report** – PS has reviewed this desk based report of data which was mainly already in existence. He and colleague Derek Clark (a Hydrogeologist at the University of Southampton) concluded that it is much as expected, being neither remarkable nor inaccurate from a hydrogeological perspective but it also contains aspects of broader environmental impacts which are quite speculative, being based largely on assumptions. PS will circulate.

ACTION: PS to circulate **Aquaterra Report**

- 3.2. **Hydrogeological Survey** – WD advised he is confident that, based on outline discussions, Alistair Morris (AM) could be of service in conducting a hydrogeological survey to determine the best location for the wetland bearing in mind his expertise and local knowledge. He is also recommended by the Wetland & Wildfowl Trust. WD will obtain a copy of AM's CV. PE thought the CEH could also undertake the work and suggested the project should be put out to tender. The indicative cost received for a survey is £100k including drilling. *This was discussed further under the Wetland item on the meeting agenda.*

ACTION: **WD to obtain Alistair Morris' CV**

- 3.3. **Sewage Issues** – BC confirmed the EA have now signed off the Southern Water infiltration reduction programme and outlined the other work Southern Water have undertaken in terms of surveys, CCTV of sewers and repairs to manhole chambers and leaking laterals. Tankering has just recommenced, but much later than last year. There is currently no pumping directly into the Bourne but within the management plan the EA have specified certain areas which can be over-pumped. BC explained that Southern Water have always said there will never be a sealed sewer, to which PE expressed his concern that there does not appear to be any end point to the problems.

SDR explained that there had been some surface water infiltration into Vitacress' sewer which had to be pumped. PE queried whether it was possible to tanker direct from Vitacress' wet well but SDR advised this would be Southern Water's decision.

SDR sees a wetland as a sustainable solution to a filtered overflow and Southern Water have indicated that they like the concept of this being located opposite their pumping station to give capacity to dispose of solids, similar to the system at Hanging Langford. BC advised that this has never been mentioned at the regular steering group meetings.

AGS highlighted the need to also look at the environmental aspects taking into account groundwater conditions at different times of the year.

On the issue of phosphorous, Vitacress' latest routine monthly sampling of water in and out of Lower Link Farm has shown groundwater at 22 parts per billion and the river at 80 parts per billion. TD commented that during these wet periods slurry management becomes an issue.

It was agreed that the BRI should request an exploratory meeting with Southern Water to seek clarification of the issues in order to understand the constraints they are facing, e.g. the BRI's supposition that OFWAT are forcing them into operational rather than capital spend and confirming whether there would be any interest in providing a new sewage system.

ACTION: **TD to arrange for him and PS to meet with John Spence from Southern Water**

4. **ELECTROFISHING**

PS reported that the twice yearly surveys are showing a consistent pattern and highlight the physical variations of the stream. He will try to repeat the survey in April and report back. The EA statistics show that work on the stream has produced good habitat and SM circulated the highlights, advising a number of large fish were identified as well as lots of recruitment and juveniles. Dominic Langley can give more information on size / class. MM commented that last season was one of the best in terms of numbers of fish.

5. **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON RESEARCH**

The two main research areas relevant to the Bourne are:

a. The phosphorous PhD which is in the final stages of write-up and combined high resolution sampling in space across the Test and Itchen with high resolution in time. Volunteers are also taking samples on the Itchen once or twice a week to establish what is happening on a high resolution timescale.

b. A pending project to establish the interaction between phosphorous and sediment on chalk streams, which will complement the PhD and give an indication of whether sediment acts as a source or sink of phosphorous.

6. **WETLAND PROJECT**

PS reminded the meeting that a wetland in the vicinity of Lower Link Farm had initially been considered with a view to one or both aims of habitat improvement and a facility to assist with maintaining water quality. Wetlands in chalk systems are quite rare.

There was much debate regarding the current driving factors for the creation of the wetland, which include biodiversity, a discharge polishing facility, the potential to provide a buffer between Vitacress' site and the stream in the event of an incident and the subsequent idea that Southern Water could utilise the facility for filtered sewage overflow treatment.

AGS feels it is not practical to combine all of these factors, for instance a sewage treatment system would probably require a bigger area. PE suggested the wetland would be maintained at optimal level, with no surplus capacity in the event of an incident, and also queried whether the water quality coming from the site feeling that the eastern channel has deteriorated again.

SDR outlined Vitacress' plans to treat phosphate on its farms on the Itchen through recirculation, with planning and permissions being sought this year and the system being installed in 2015. He explained that similar systems are operational in Portugal. SM feels recirculation will also address the sediment issues.

AGS asked if the land below the viaduct is a recorded water meadow and suggested this should be checked with HCC's archaeology department. There may be an opportunity to utilise existing channels.

ACTION: **SDR to check whether land is recorded as a water meadow**

PE reiterated his suggestion that the wetland should be located at the top of the site thereby improving the water balance from the abstraction on the site.

After lengthy discussion TD proposed that the Group agree that the prime purpose of the wetland is for conservation, but it could have the added benefit of being used as a polishing mechanism to improve water quality beyond the discharge consent limits and, if located at the head of the property, would also enable replenishment of groundwater. Anything to treat sewage would be a separate project.

TN had previously indicated it would cost *ca.* £20-£25k to work up a more detailed scheme, which would presumably include some hydrogeology. A sub-group comprising PS, TD, SDR, WD and CR will be formed to write an outline brief and questions and then put out to tender to the Wetland and Wildfowl Trust and other contractors, including any the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust use.

ACTIONS: **AI to advise contractors H&IOWWT use
PS/TD/SDR/WD/CR to write brief**

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1. In response to a question from MM about potential dredging of the Somerset Levels, TD advised none of the chalk streams have been included in the pilot area proposed by DEFRA.

7.2. PS asked that the agenda for the next meeting includes an item to consider the future of this Group and its relationship to others involved in restoration and management of chalk rivers.

ACTION: **ALL to bring detail of various groups to give an understanding of their activities / objectives etc.**

7.3. AGS suggested Rupert Kelton (Co-ordinator for Catchment Partnership on Upper Test) should give a presentation at the next meeting.

ACTION: **TN to advise Rupert that he will be receiving an invitation to the next meeting.**

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 15 May @ 10am at Vitacress' offices, Lower Link Farm, St Mary Bourne.