



MINUTES OF THE BOURNE SUB CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING

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

TUESDAY, 30 APRIL 2013

PRESENT:	Gail Taylor (Chair) (GT)	-	University of Southampton and VCT
	Carrie Hutchings (Secretary)	-	Vitacress Salads Ltd
	Bridget Culley (BC)	-	St Mary Bourne Parish Council
	Tom Davis (TD)	-	Test & Itchen Association
	Peter Evans (PE)	-	Advisor
	Shirley Medgett (SM)	-	Environment Agency
	Tim Nevard (TN)	-	VCT
	Steve Rothwell (SDR)	-	Vitacress Ltd and VCT
	Mike Rushworth (MJER)	-	Vitacress Salads Ltd
	Pete Shaw (PS)	-	University of Southampton

1. APOLOGIES

William Daniel	-	Famous Fishing
Henry du Val de Beaulieu	-	Apsley Farms
Alison Graham-Smith	-	Natural England
Sarah Lynes	-	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Michael Malyon	-	Lower Wyke Farm
Graham Roberts	-	Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Bob Wellard	-	Piscatorial Society

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Management Group Meeting held on 10 September 2012 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 15 November 2012 were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

3.1. Extraordinary Meeting (15 November)

GT reminded the attendees of the key points agreed at the Extraordinary Meeting held on 15 November.

- 3.1.1. SDR advised that he and Nick Stenning will shortly be meeting with two senior Southern Water representatives with a view to establishing a time frame within which they will have completed their work to resolve the sewer issues in St Mary Bourne. Tom Davis has also met with John Spence and Merryck Gough of Southern Water. It was pointed out that assurances had been given by the EA at the

Extraordinary Meeting that no over pumping would be allowed. However Southern Water went ahead without permission. This was discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

- 3.1.2. The next research priority had been highlighted as the need for a hydrogeological survey but GT pointed out this would be costly and consideration needs to be given as to how funding might be achieved. Again, this was discussed in more detail later in the meeting.

3.2. **Bourne Sub Catchment Management Group Meeting (10 September)**

- 3.2.1. WD had been actioned to contact Alastair Morris to discuss carrying out a hydrogeological survey to determine whether the wetland should be located upstream or downstream. He will be asked to update the next meeting.
ACTION: WILLIAM DANIEL (WD): to update the next meeting on his contact with Alistair Morris.
- 3.2.2. Michael Malyon had confirmed in an email that he had been successful in having the seepaway opposite Chapmansford dug out.
- 3.2.3. PS will chase Derek Clark re the critique of the Aquaterra report.
ACTION: PETE SHAW – to circulate the Aquaterra report critique

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

On initiation of the Group it had been agreed that the Chair should rotate. GT explained that she still wishes to be involved with the Group but her current workload prevents her driving it forward. SDR proposed and TD seconded that PS should be appointed Chair. GT agreed to continue in the Chair for this meeting.

5. **SEWAGE ISSUES**

BC informed the meeting that a Technical Steering Group has been set up under Hampshire County Council, with representation from Southern Water, the Environment Agency, St Mary Bourne Parish Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Basingstoke & Deane Council, and will meet monthly. She explained that to date about half of the drainage system has been surveyed. Three of the over pumping stations have been removed, leaving just one by Holloway cottages, and the tankering has reduced.

At the beginning of the year BC met with Sir George Young MP, a regional manager from the Environment Agency and the CEO from Southern Water. The latter gave assurances that as soon as the water level drops sufficiently they will start sealing leaking laterals and undertake a camera survey. Any shared lateral is now the responsibility of Southern Water and they have also agreed to repair any leaks to private laterals so long as it is not too costly. In addition, some manholes require repair.

Discussion focussed on the longer term, recognising that any short term solution would only be temporary and Southern Water's reluctance to commit capital investment was highlighted. Concern was expressed that the EA are not taking a firmer position with Southern Water, particularly bearing in mind Vitacress were prosecuted for a recent diesel spillage. It was agreed that PS should draft a letter to the EA, circulating it to the BRI for endorsement (excluding SM) before sending, asking them to:

1. Take a more decisive line with Southern Water in terms of potential prosecution
2. Explain their stance in waiting for the infiltration reduction plan, pointing out that this plan would not be acceptable as a means of avoidance for prosecution unless it has defined timeframes and budgets.
3. Pointing out that the only emergency condition relevant would be if public health is threatened.

TD also thought a stronger message, with the EA submitting evidence to OFWAT, would ensure Southern Water committed to capital investment.

ACTION: PETE SHAW (PS): to draft a letter to the EA for the BRI group to approve.

6. **WETLAND**

TN explained that the original concept of the wetland had been to deal with the ecological remediation of the valley, not the sewage issues. Discussion followed regarding its ability to also act as a "polishing" facility rather than a failsafe for Vitacress Salads discharges. PS feels that the ecological and sewage issues should be separated. PE outlined his reasons for suggesting the wetland should be located upstream; TN advised most of his experience has been focussed on gravity fed wetlands, whereas PE's suggestion would require pumping, but the final siting remains open for debate.

Discussion focussed on phosphorous, with PE suggesting alternative production methods such as sealed beds should be introduced, although it was highlighted that not all of the phosphorous is coming from Vitacress. TN highlighted the large volumes of blanket weed and brown algae upstream of Vitacress and TD commented that algae is also prevalent upstream of Drayton cress beds. SDR suggested the EA should be regulating on the total mass of phosphorus that the river can take rather than using point in time concentrations to manage discharges. TD suggested building a mass balance model by employing an inventory of phosphate receipts, usage and sampling. SDR explained that such a study had already been conducted for Vitacress by CEH which showed over 80% of all applied phosphorous remained in the crop.

PE pointed out that the requirement for a gauging weir to measure watercress farm outflows has been removed from the revised consent, with a proposal to use abstraction licences which he does not consider fair. SDR explained that many watercress farms are artesian with little or no control of the water that rises in and flows from them so unrealistic to demand they measure it.

It was agreed that the hydrogeological survey is necessary and funding suggestions were DEFRA, Hampshire County Council in conjunction with the sewage issues, another approach to Southern Water (copied to Sir George Young) and the Bright Waters

Society. GT thought the VCT might be able to contribute c.£20k spread over a few years but The Trust should not lead the initiative. SDR will ask Rob Murdock to give an indicative cost for a hydrogeological survey.

ACTION: STEVE ROTHWELL (SDR): to ask Rob Murdock to give an indicative cost for a hydrogeological survey

Post meeting note: RM has confirmed c £100k after a brief outline

In terms of the wetland, BC feels that anything which enhances the environment will be welcomed by the local community. PE feels there is an opportunity to redress some of the abstraction imbalance which would be beneficial but may dictate where the wetland is located. TN will ask WWT to quote for the next step in taking the wetland proposal to the scoping stage.

ACTION: TIM NEVARD (TN): to obtain a quote for taking the wetland proposal to the scoping stage.

TD advised that two flushes of yellow/green water seen in the Bourne recently were thought to be associated with overflow from slurry tanks upstream after heavy rain.

7. **ELECTROFISHING**

PS explained that unfortunately his team were unable to conduct the electrofishing last September. This survey had been in addition to the original arrangement which ran for two years so PS will now submit an invoice to the VCT for the second year, along with a final copy of his report. PS is keen to continue but availability of people is an issue.

ACTION: PETE SHAW (PS): to submit invoice and final report to the VCT Trustees.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1. **University of Southampton Research**

PS advised that a series of phosphorus sampling has been undertaken across the upper reaches of the Test and Itchen,.. The plan is to build 12 months' data,.. Volunteers from NatureTrek will be taking regular samples on the Itchen tributaries and the next stage is to focus on the Test. Sampling locations have been chosen above and below potential sources of phosphorous. PS will give an update on the PhD at this year's Chalk Stream Headwaters Forum.

8.2. **Tim Nevard**

TN advised the meeting that he will be retiring this summer and will therefore not be so heavily involved in the VCT or BRI but will remain a member of both.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

CH will circulate a Doodle request for availability to meet late September.