

# Minutes of Upper Itchen Initiative Meeting

10am, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2012

## Abbotstone Farm House

Present:

Chairman: Graham Roberts (GR) Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Gail Taylor (GT) University of Southampton (minutes)  
Pete Shaw(PS) University of Southampton  
Martin de Retuerto (MdR) Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Ben Rushbrook (BR) Project Officer, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Mark Baring (MBAR) Riparian owner – son of Lord Ashburton  
Sam Baring (SBAR)  
Simon Ffennel (SF) Riparian owner  
Roger Harrison (RH) Riparian owner  
Charles Barter (CB) Watercress Company  
Ollie Bedford (OB) Watercress Company  
Kerry Evans (KE) Environment Agency  
Ben Rayner (BRa) Environment Agency  
Tom Davis (TD) T&I / Wessex Rivers Trust  
Serena Leadley (SL) Natural England  
Charlotte Rose (CR) Natural England  
Steve Rothwell (SR) Vitacress Salads/ Vitacress Conservation Trust  
Martin Burton (MB) Independent Consultant

### 1. Apologies

Rue Ekins (RE) Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust  
Chris Jeffes (CJ) Alresford Salads  
Tim Nevard (TN) VCT  
Rose Timlett (RT) WWF UK  
Tom Amery (TA) Watercress Company  
Tim Sykes (TS) Environment Agency  
Gwen Isaacs (GI) University of Southampton

### 2. Introductions

Serena Leadley was introduced as the NE Catchment Sensitive Farming replacement for Nigel Thomas Child. She will be based in Winchester and covering Test and Itchen. The current focus is to develop Catchment Plans for both Itchen and Test and will be interacting with people as appropriate over the coming months.

The meeting requested an update on what Catchment Sensitive Farming had achieved on the Itchen and Test. Serena reported that new individuals were still joining the scheme which was a good indication and that she was in the process of organising up to 15 one-to-one meetings with these individuals.

It was agreed that hearing about CSF news and events would be of value and that members of UII should be put in email contact with Serena to ensure they were kept informed

[ACTION Gwen Isaacs \(GI\) – to organise email contact with Serena](#)

Gail Taylor requested that Serena also be invited to cover CSF at the meetings of the BRI.

[\*\*ACTION Gwen Isaacs \(GI\) – to invite Serena Leadley to BRI meetings.\*\*](#)

## **2a. Minutes from the Previous Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

Minutes were accepted.

## **3. and 4. Alresford Pond and Research at University**

Pete Shaw reported that the PhD of Arthur Leung was now underway. Two sampling times had been completed before and after a rainfall event on the upper Itchen to enable Arthur to develop his sampling protocols and get technology for measuring up and running. High levels of phosphorous had been recorded at Drove Lane and The Soke particularly in the colloid fraction which was still biologically active P. At 0.4 mg l<sup>-1</sup> this was well above EA recommended concentrations (0.06) to cause alarm. Pete also reported that turbidity would be assessed and that he was working closely with land owners to develop a network of volunteers for sampling, with a fairly simple protocol. Training would be given to all of the volunteers.

TD reported that a new mobile laboratory had been purchased by Wessex water for 'real-time' measurements of water quality and wondered where it might be possible to share such a facility or for funds to be found for a similar purchase. GT reported than funds to cover up to 50% of the cost of such a large scale piece of kit might be available from the university Mulsar Fund.

[\*\*ACTION Pete Shaw \(PS\) – to report an update on the project at the next meeting. Pete to investigate the possibility of developing a bid for up to £70K for Mulsar Funding with 50% met from the university.\*\*](#)

Pete Shaw also reported large amounts of sediment moving into the Bourne following recent heavy rainfall, that was observed during field work and likely to be road run-off.

## **5. Environment Agency Update**

Ben Rayner was welcomed as new to the group and has taken on the role as Catchment Coordinator for the Test and Itchen for the EA as part of the delivery team. He would be focussing on outfacing activity to ensure the WFD was implemented. The focus would be on waterbodies not considered in 'good status'. Graham Roberts suggested that The Headwaters must remain a priority since they were critical to success elsewhere. Ben agreed to identify appropriate partners over the coming months and to report back to the group at the next meeting.

It was also proposed Ben Rayner should attend the next BRI meeting.

[\*\*ACTION Gwen Isaacs \(GI\) – to invite Ben Rayner to next BRI meeting\*\*](#)

## 6. Natural England Update

Charlotte Rose reported several new grants awarded that would enable NE to complete several studies. These included :

-£50K to continue to develop a River Restoration Strategy for the Test and Itchen

-£15k for work on in-line lakes on the Test and Itchen

--£22k for general work on Test and Itchen diffuse pollution plan actions

Charlotte reported on the aim to work with EA on the Itchen and Test and to have a reviewed "Diffuse Water Pollution plan" in place for Test and Itchen, and some actions underway by end of 2012. She also reported that the £50K fund would enable work towards the WFD to be implemented but TD was sceptical that the WFD was an effective mechanism to ensure successful management of water quality since the directive was often based on flimsy empirical data and limited expert opinion. TD was of the opinion that a 'Diffuse Water Pollution Plan' needed much wider consultation than had occurred to date. In particular, mechanisms of delivery should be clarified.

[ACTION Charlotte Rose \(CR\) and EA lead \[not yet agreed\] – to review the completed plan for the Itchen and Test, ready for discussions with stakeholders , thus moving forward together NB: the DWPP is an agreed signed-off document between the EA and NE. The actions contained within it are mostly aimed at EA or NE, although they do need reviewing, and those actions for other stakeholders \(highways departments\) will need to be discussed with those affected parties.](#)

## 7. Project updates from HWT, WCSRT etc

EA Candover Augmentation Report.

Kerry Evans reported that Southern Water had commissioned a report on Augmentation, including a consideration of ecological and hydrological conditions and consequences associated with augmentation.

[ACTION Kerry Evans \(KE\) – to circulate the report to the group](#)

Graham Roberts reported that the Gammarus study in Alresford was underway with the consultant Rob Murdock from Environ with specific sampling taking place in May.

[ACTION Graham Roberts \(GR\) – Data to be reported next meeting](#)

The meeting was also concerned however that chlorine was being discharged from the wash water at Alresford Salads and this was going directly into an SAC. TD and RH wished to know directly if this practice was still happened. As no-one was present for Alresford Salads, a detailed answer wasn't available but it was thought likely that some chlorine washing was still occurring and with no access to mains drainage chlorine or its breakdown products were still likely to be discharged.

SDR reported how chlorine can be neutralised with sodium metabisulphite but that other decontamination chemicals are also likely to be needed in a food factory as a part of floor and equipment hygiene. At St Mary Bourne, chlorine in salad wash water was no longer used. However SDR reported that the increase in Gammarus numbers at SMB appeared to

be more tightly linked to the removal of PEITC (a natural chemical in watercress and other brassica crops) from wash water using a settling tank system. Since PEITC had a fast decay rate, this system had been effective.

[ACTION Graham Roberts \(GR\) – agreed to get conclusive answers from Alresford Salads on how much chlorine was being used in wash water, and other chemicals in the factory, and what details of the current plans to end this practice in Alresford. He will also meet with Chris Jeffes prior to next meeting and report back.](#)

[ACTION Kerry Evans \(KE\) to check where monitoring was being undertaken and what was the frequency of this monitoring.](#)

**Special Update** - Steve Rothwell gave an update on the spillage of diesel that had occurred from the SMB site on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012. It appeared that the spill, which occurred when usual control procedures had broken down during a power failure that necessitated a portable diesel generator to be deployed and manually refuelled, had caused limited damage to the Bourne. Both EA and a specialist contractor had been on-site in good time and the spill contained. No fish mortalities were recorded, from what appeared to be a volume of 10s-100s L diesel. EA had assessed downstream invertebrate numbers after the spill to determine if there was any cause for concern but reported none with no plans to re-sample.

[ACTION Pete Shaw \(PS\) – to undertake electric fishing again in July, when data would be available to assess any impact of the spill on fish population numbers](#)

## **8. AOB**

Martin De Retuerto reported a large bid in preparation on river restoration on the Itchen and Bourne. (Catchment Restoration Fund) This was a large ambitious bid involving a large number of land owners with funding from DEFRA, but time was very tight to make a viable submission. The most focus would be placed on Itchen/Winchester/Winnall and upstream. Graham Roberts suggested Dr Derek Clarke as a speaker at the next Headwaters Forum, to speak on hydrology of chalk rivers and the impacts of augmentation schemes.

[ACTION Gail Taylor \(GT\) – to take this recommendation back to the VCT trustees](#)

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

9th October at Abbotstone 10am by kind permission of Mark and Sam Baring