



# Lower Otter Restoration Project

## Minutes of the Stakeholder Group Meeting

Temple Hall, Budleigh Salterton

10 a.m. Wednesday 19 October 2016

### 1 - Attendees

Cllr Tom Wright (Chair)	(East Devon District Council & Budleigh Salterton Town Council)
Malcolm Baker	(Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club)
Cllr Christine Channon	(Devon County Council)
Richard Spurway	(Devon County Council)
Cllr Geoff Jung	(East Devon District Council - Colaton Raleigh)
James Chubb	(East Devon District Council)
Steve Panks	(Natural England)
Christy Tolliday	(Natural England)
Haylor Lass	(Otter Valley Association)
Ian Wycherley	(Representing South Farm residents and businesses)
David Butler	(Representing Granary Lane residents)
Sam Bridgewater	(EDPHCT / Clinton Devon Estates)
Laura Rose	(Environment Agency)
Mike Williams	(Environment Agency)
Megan Rimmer	(Environment Agency)
Mike Clarke	(East Budleigh & Bicton Parish Council)
Jayne Savage	(Clinton Devon Estates)
Annette Richman	(KOR Communications)
Andrew Howard	(KOR Communications)

### 2 - Apologies

Chris Woodruff	(East Devon AONB)
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### 3 - Introduction

All members introduced themselves and a contact details sheet was circulated for completion.

4 - Meeting was originally planned for 21 September but postponed to ensure all up to date information available.

### 5 - Updates

The Environment Agency's National Project Approvals Service has approved the business case for the appraisal phase of the project. The appraisal and outline design phase of the project has been put out to tender.

The EA hope to award a contract by late October. The whole options and outline design appraisal process will take about 12 months.

The whole project is estimated to cost £8.5m (which includes cricket club relocation costs). Primary funding streams sought are from the Environment Agency National Approval Panel (Flood Defence), the Heritage Lottery Fund and INTERREG France-Channel-England (European funding).

A question was raised as to whether Brexit will make a difference to the INTERREG application. Defra and INTERREG have indicated that applications should continue to be submitted and until Britain leaves the EU, applications approved should still be honoured. The European funding stream being sought requires partners from France and Britain.

Paperwork for development funding from HLF should be finished by the end of Nov 2016 with applications to go to funding board by Jan 2017. Decision anticipated by March 2017.

EA confirmed that it is a legal requirement, for them to provide compensatory habitat where this is threatened through “coastal squeeze” and new flood defence works. When Britain leaves the EU it will likely still continue to be a requirement.

SB (the Estate) clarified that the main driver for the project, from their perspective, was not to deliver compensatory habitat and that this was only a recent development. The primary drivers for them was attaining more sustainable management of the Estuary and creating multiple benefits for wildlife and people.

The “Facts About The Lower Otter Restoration Project” leaflet was circulated. SB clarified that this was an attempt to communicate the project vision in a visual way and sought feedback from the Group. Initial comments noted:

Suggested that a date be added.

It should be added to the website.

Title changed to include “proposed”.

Area of habitats cited should say ‘up to 60 ha’ rather than 60 ha

Cricket Club were disappointed that the three maps did not show the trunk outfall.

**Action: any further comments to be sent to SB**

Cricket Club (MB) support the project and stated that they are happy to relocate if a suitable alternative is found and that the relocation paid for. It was highlighted that they still have a 17 year lease with the Estate. MB estimated that the relocation could cost £1.5m. EA confirmed that this had been taken into account in the £8.5m estimate.

### **Cliff Survey / Granary Lane**

The Geology report was welcomed by the residents of Granary Lane but they questioned the credibility of the geologist who produced it; ideally they would have liked to have a degree of confidence associated with the findings. SB offered to circulate the geologist’s CV to the Stakeholders. The group agreed that the report was professionally presented, fair and contained

facts not opinions. The Granary Lane representative (DB) stated that confirmation was needed that the risk to properties is minimal, and that accountability was required in case anything happens. Discussion was had on the difficulty of providing guarantees against nature.

### **FAB link (France Alderney Britain) Project**

Chris Jenner (FAB) has visited and spoken to residents. He had advised that if the cable is positioned along the side of the river, the footpath on the west side of the Estuary would be raised with compacted stone and soil, providing more flood defence.

**[NB. During the meeting there was some doubt as to the width of land required along the line of the existing public footpath to adequately protect the two proposed cables. Subsequent to the meeting DB (Granary Lane) contacted Chris Jenner who confirmed that although usually the two cables need to be installed up to 8m part (to prevent overheating), along the footpath section the cable trenches can be adjoining as more copper can be added to ensure the thermal independence of each cable is maintained. DB requested that this additional information be added to the minutes. FAB Link's Project Description made available during its public consultation & still available on their website: <http://www.fablink.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Chapter-2-Project-Description-1.pdf>]**

## **6 - Shaping the Stakeholder Group**

Laura Rose, Environment Agency – see Appendix A for the output from this session and Appendix B for the draft Engagement Plan for Phase 2.

**Action – please confirm Appendix A is an accurate record and provide any comments on Appendix B by 25 November 2016**

### **6.1 - Website**

The website is up and running it was agreed that Sam Bridgewater and Megan Rimmer should be the first points of contact.

It was suggested that the website should provide an opportunity for people to make a comment that would be responded to. SB stated that he was happy to co-ordinate this.

It was also suggested that Stakeholder Group members' contact details should be included on the website. All agreed except Ian Wycherley (South Farm representative) who requested that his details were not included on a public website.

It was agreed that there was a need to promote the website.

CDE to include details on Facebook and Twitter.

### **6.2 - Public Exhibitions**

Suggested that two public exhibitions should be held

1. Provide an opportunity to see initial options and ask key questions on the project
2. Provide an opportunity to feedback on any preferred options towards the end of the appraisal and outline design phase.

Dates of community events suggested as potentially useful for project exhibitions

- 8 & 9 April 2017 at Budleigh Salterton Food Festival.
- April / May 2017 at Town Council meeting.

It was suggested that exhibition boards should be placed in the library and then moved to the Health Centre.

## **7 - Issues Log**

Confirmed nothing to change. Important to leave any “closed” items on the log to identify which matters have been dealt with. IW (South Farm representative) raised the issue of mosquitos. The group agreed that this was an issue but it was currently adequately listed in the log (i.e. a concern that was open). MW (Environment Agency) stated that he hoped the Public Health England were interested in studying the site as part of a research project. This was welcomed.

## **8 - Statement**

It was agreed that a statement should be written to represent the outcome of the meeting. KOR Communications were requested to draw up a statement to circulate for agreement.

A draft Statement is included as Appendix C, at the end of the minutes.

**Action: Please confirm your agreement to the statement of the meeting.**

## **9 - AOB**

- It was requested that the minutes of the meeting were circulated promptly after the meeting and sent again with the next meeting’s agenda.
- James Chubb offered to arrange a visit to Seaton to view a current habitat recreation project.
- Malcolm Baker (Cricket Club) highlighted that the leaflet does not illustrate the outfall pipe on Budleigh Beach. He stated that the Deed of Gift, held by the Cricket Club and EDDC, states that water should be allowed to drain into the sea unimpeded. The EA confirmed that if the project goes ahead the outfall would not be required. MB stated that FAB have been in discussions with EDDC to see if they might be able to undertake works to assist its drainage.
- Website to be linked to EDDC website and Facebook.

- Ian Wycherley stated that the Position Statement produced on behalf of the South Farm Community for the last meeting had not yet been circulated and requested it to be included with the minutes this time. He also requested a response to it. Statement attached, together with response compiled by SB on behalf of the project.

**10 - Date of next meeting – Wednesday 1 February 2017 – Please confirm availability**

**Appendix C – Draft Statement of the Meeting**

We are now moving towards phase two of the Lower Otter Restoration Project, the business case for this stage having been approved by the Environment Agency's National Project Approvals Service.

The Lower Otter Restoration Project Stakeholder Group is keen for everyone to be able to make their views known to its members and is committed to strive for open, transparent and honest consultation with all concerned.

The members of the stakeholder group have agreed a communications protocol to make sure that, to the best of our ability, all stakeholders are kept fully informed about how the project is proceeding.

Names and email contact details of the members of the stakeholder group will be, with their permission, made available on the project website, [www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk](http://www.lowerotterrestorationproject.co.uk) so members of the public and other interested parties can raise any aspect of the project with them and have their views and questions made known and discussed.

The group also notes that the project team have been encouraged by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to continue to seek funding from the European Union, under the France (Channel) England Interreg VA programme.

