



Lower Otter Restoration Project

Minutes of the Stakeholder Group Meeting

Temple Hall, Budleigh Salterton

10 a.m. Wednesday 1 February 2017

1 - Attendees

Cllr Tom Wright (Chair)	(East Devon District Council & Budleigh Salterton Town Council)
Malcolm Baker	(Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club)
Chris Woodruff	(East Devon AONB)
Cllr Geoff Jung	(East Devon District Council - Colaton Raleigh)
James Chubb	(East Devon District Council)
David Turner	(East Devon District Council)
Cllr John Fudge	(Otterton Parish Council)
Christy Tolliday	(Natural England)
Ian Wycherley	(Representing South Farm residents and businesses)
Sam Bridgewater	(EDPHCT / Clinton Devon Estates)
Mike Williams	(Environment Agency)
Megan Rimmer	(Environment Agency)
Jayne Savage	(Clinton Devon Estates)
Andrew Howard	(KOR Communications)
Toby Wilson	(Consultant CH2M)
Nicola Daniels	(Otter Valley Association)

2 - Apologies

Cllr Christine Channon
Richard Spurway
Steve Panks
Haylor Lass
David Butler
Lynne Jones
Dr David Smith

Ian Wycherley had been asked by David Butler to represent the Granary Lane residents because neither himself nor his deputy (Lynne Jones) could attend. He requested to audio tape the meeting and there were no objections.

3 - Introduction

Actions all completed. Minutes Agreed

4 - For Decision - Finalise Engagement Offer

Draft of Engagement Plan was circulated to group prior to meeting to enable time to read.

There was some discussion as to the timetable and process of engagement, and clarification was requested as to when engagement would be with the stakeholder group and when with the public. It was agreed that the Engagement Offer would benefit from clarification from timings of activities and groups targeted. It was also agreed that the Stakeholder Group would, through the chairperson, be able to escalate an issue to the Project Board should they feel that the Stakeholder Group is not functioning adequately. In such a scenario, a member of the Project Board could be invited to address the Group for clarification and to explain the project stance taken.

The Issues Log and Engagement Plan Offer were agreed, with the proviso that timings and target audiences of activities are clarified.

Action – MR to provide a timeline of the proposed engagement.

5 – For Discussion – Flooding in November 2016

- Four photographs were circulated of River Otter flooding in November 2016, with photographs showing flood water spilling over the embankment south of White Bridge from the west to the east. The group was advised that the photographs were taken following a relatively small flood. Damage of eroding embankments was also shown.
- Ian Wycherley reported that when he examined the banks, the morning after Storm Angus, there were 15-20 gouges a few inches deep within 100 yards of White Bridge upstream and downstream.
- James Chubb reported that at Seaton Wetlands, during the 2016 floods, flood water was directed to, and held in, Black Hole Marsh under controlled conditions. The duration of flooding was reduced by the presence of a natural breach that had deliberately not been repaired.

6 – For Discussion - Updates

Project Update Report was circulated prior to meeting.

- Toby Wilson reported that their consultants (CH2M – acting on behalf of the Environment Agency) have started a physical survey of the Lower Otter Valley to fully understand the topography and flood dynamics between Otterton and the sea. The information gained will be used to understand flood risk and to help inform the Options Appraisal for the Lower Otter Project.

Flow measurements are also being taken and recorded. Once the South Farm plantation is felled (estimated start date mid-February) the landfill site will be investigated using trial pits and boreholes.

It was confirmed that the topographical survey will include South Farm Road.

It was confirmed that any modelling would be useful in assessing weaknesses in current infrastructure (e.g. where breaches might occur) even if the project doesn't go ahead, although the primary aim of modelling is not to provide a prediction tool for this situation.

- Long List of Options report was circulated. To be condensed into Short List assessing whether they meet the project objectives. Report currently lists every option including some from the Haycock report and others raised at public engagement events, some of which won't meet the objectives, but important to include.

Comments or additions from Stakeholders, and those who they represent, requested to be submitted by 28 February 2017. This is to be followed by a group discussion prior to the first public exhibition.

Action – All

- The situation regarding car parking was raised – If visitor and traffic increases, provision will need to be made for additional parking, Otterton and East Budleigh already saturated. Lime Kiln car park is the obvious solution which in turn would benefit local businesses. Car Parking to be added to Issues List.
- Ian Wycherley requested a “round table” discussion for a small number of Granary Lane and South Farm Road residents with EA. Mike Williams agreed to meet. Ian Wycherley to provide contact details.

Action - IW

- EA reported the importance of relocating the Cricket Club:- without relocating the project options are limited and if no change is made future flooding cannot be ruled out. Heritage Lottery Fund will not cover relocation costs, but have asked to see a plan for how the cricket club relocation will be funded. Possible funding from EA Flood Defence Grant in Aid, England Cricket Board (ECB), Sport England, EU funding and cricket club. A report commissioned by Clinton Devon Estates has provided estimated relocation costs. ECB and Sport England have certain criteria that have to be met regarding facilities.

Landfill Community funding is also a possibility

EU rules on State Aid are also being investigated; government funding cannot provide an economic advantage to an organisation. It was agreed that with so many parties involved (EA, CDE, BSCC, EDDC, ECB) there is a need for a “common voice” to make the bid stronger.

BSCC agreed to provide a list of current facilities before the end of February to allow time to prepare for HLF Bid (due by 6 March 2017).

Action - MB

- David Turner reported that EDDC have agreed a budget of £18,500 for the fitting of a “duck bill” valve at the end of the outfall through the shingle ridge. This work will ideally be completed before the summer but probably September 2017. The duck bill valve acts to reduce the build up of shingle and ensure water is allowed out with every tide. This will reduce the maintenance cost of removing shingle. This process will not solve the main problem with flooding caused by climate change and sea level rise.
- Granary Lane residents raised concern regarding damage to gardens, this should be resolved if path is raised and therefore forms a barrier.
- South Farm residents were advised that work to clear the trees at South Farm Tip should be done within the next few weeks, at the request of Western Power Distribution, with no plans to replant. The work may be seen as brutal but will be beneficial to local wildlife in the long term. It was agreed that signs should be erected to notify public.
- Natural England advised that they have been in communication with FAB-Link Project and are awaiting their planning application. The EA highlighted that the proposal to raise the footpath as part of FAB-Link would be designed to ensure that water can drain, should any overtop the path during extreme spring tides.

7 – Issues Log

No additions prior to meeting. Car parking management to be added. There was discussion around the existing shortage of car parking spaces and how the project, if implemented would likely increase the attractiveness of the area for tourism. The need to understand and manage access and parking was recognised.

8 - AOB

- A representative from FAB-Link will be attending the next Town Council meeting (first Wednesday in April) and it was suggested that a member of the Stakeholder Group should also attend to report back.
- Public Health England are implementing a project to research the relationship between managed realignment schemes and mosquitos/biting insects. They have asked if the Otter Estuary could be used as one of their 12 research sites. It was agreed that this would be beneficial and help improve understanding of the potential risks of biting insects related to LORP.

- James Chubb offered a visit to Seaton Wetlands Nature Reserve to see the work that has been carried out there. Agreed date 15 March. Agenda and directions to be circulated by Jayne Savage. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for the Stakeholders to discuss the Long List. Stakeholders to ensure details of Long list are circulated to those they represent and all comments returned to Jayne Savage jayne.savage@clintondevon.com before 28 February.

Action - All

9 - Statement

Andrew Howard was requested to write a statement to represent the outcome of the meeting.

Action – All

10. Date of next meeting Wednesday 10 May 2017 – Please confirm availability

Appendix – Draft Statement of the Meeting

Now there is a formal Lower Otter Restoration Programme partnership, with board members from Clinton Devon Estates and the Environment Agency, members of the stakeholder group have been asked to discuss a “long list” of options for the future direction of the project with those they represent, and to put forward any further options which may not yet have been considered. Comments and suggestions should be emailed to Jayne Savage at Clinton Devon Estates (Jayne.Savage@ClintonDevon.com) by the end of February for distribution to the project team.

A special meeting will be held on March 15 at Seaton Wetlands Local Nature Reserve (to incorporate a visit to the inter-tidal habitat), so the stakeholder group can help produce a short list of options which will then go out to wider public consultation – likely to be in May or June 2017.

Members of the group also asked that the project should consider the impacts of a potential increase in visitor numbers to the area, particularly in respect of local car parking.

The group noted that:

- Engineering and environmental consultants CH2M Hill had been appointed, and that investigative work on the physical features of the estuary such as ground levels, bridges and culverts had begun.
- The project was continuing to investigate sources of funding for the relocation of Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club.
- Public Health England, with funding from NERC, (Natural Environment Research Council), has proposed using the Otter Valley as one of 12 sites for a research project called Wetland Life, which in part looks at mosquito ecology and management.
- Imminent tree felling near South Farm was being undertaken at the request of Western Power Distribution to ensure resilience of the power supply to the area, and was not connected with the Lower Otter Restoration Project.
- The website www.lowerotterresorationproject.co.uk is being updated with information about the project as it becomes available.