

Minutes of the Clun Catchment Partnership Meeting
Tuesday 25th February 2015
Aston on Clun Village Hall 10:00am-12:30pm

Attendees:

Joy Greenall	Land, Life & Livelihoods and Farmer
Rob Harris	DEFRA/Community Member
Ken Downward	CSFI (Natural England)
Carol Griffiths	Farmer/NFU
Mervin Mullard	Farmer/NFU
Mike Kelly	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Phil Holden	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Liz Etheridge	Environment Agency
Paul Haywood	Environment Agency
John Croxton	Farmer
Alison Slade	Shropshire Council

1. Apologies

Fiona Gomersall	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Emma Buckingham	Severn Rivers Trust
Thomas O'Hanlon	Severn Trent Water
Leo Smith	Upper Clun Community Wildlife Group
Sarah Faulkner	NFU
Lucy Roberts	Natural England

2. Notes of last meeting 5th Nov 2014 and matters arising

3. Updates

a) Farmer Reps

This section of the meeting was a round table discussion highlighting landowner's experiences of working alongside the River Clun.

- John reported that extensive riverbank tree planting has not worked in some places and he would like to be able to take more positive measures to control aggressive erosion especially near Clunbury.
- Rob reported that in the past were farmers allowed to take gravel from the river, with little intervention, the river is now starting to meander – Rob reported that recent studies indicate in the upper Clun as much as 60% of sediment is thought to derive from riverbanks and road verges.
- Mervin, reported that the water used to be managed much more than it is now. For example, past water meadow management helped to fertilise the fields.
- Joy commented that we need to take a whole catchment view and it is not down to a single issue. We have unnatural flows, compaction, Himalayan balsam etc..
- Mike comment that pressures in the lower Clun are different to those of the upper Clun.
- Mervin expressed concern about delays in the planning process. Alison commented this was often down to applicants not supplying the information requested as part of the planning requirements for the Clun. Bob commented that water issues may not be to blame for delays, a recent development was held up due to great crested newt issues.
- John asked if ant pressure is being put on Severn Trent Water to upgrade wastewater treatment works – see minutes from 5th Nov 2014 for STW response.

b) Land, Life & Livelihoods

Joy reported on 3 recent events hosted by LLL. Event focus has been new environment schemes. Last event included a talk by Woodland Trust and how they can benefit the farm to address issues such as resilience and climate change. Good feedback from the meeting. **Action:** Joy to report comments to next Clun Partnership Meeting.

c) UCCWG

Bob and Mervin attended recent UCCWG AGM. Mervin commented that deer appear to be more numerous. Bob reported that focus is to widen and to include more mammal activity. Also reported that Leo Smith had circulated a Report/Survey of Kingfishers which had indicated a complete decline in numbers across Shropshire. Leo is investigating.

d) Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Fiona had emailed short note which reported that there will be ongoing monitoring of wildlife sites in the Clun and Teme Catchment and that more ditch and grip blocking was to be undertaken at Mason's Bank.

e) Severn Rivers Trust

Phil reported on behalf of SRT – Catchment Partnership Fund £46K available for project in the Teme Catchment.

John suggested it would be useful to have some detailed mapping of the Clun Catchment. Proposed this could be an agenda item for future meetings. Mike and Ken commented that lots of map data is available. Some of this is via existing reports available on the AONB website or via Defra's "Magic Map" **Action: Mike to compile a list of map data sources.**

f) Environment Agency

Liz reported that EA have been successful in acquiring further capital funding for a 6 year Clun project, (funds to be applied for annually). Focus will be on sediment sources and pathways in the lower Clun and Kemp.

This provoked much comment about how sediment is getting into the Clun.

Carol commented that larger vehicles are creating sediment problems, with sediment often deriving from farm gateways, verges, passing places and green lanes (4WD). Ken commented that lots of sediment is derived from the many farm tracks that lead to the highway, and from compacted soils, bare soils and the intensity of farming overall. With regard to 4WD'ers, it was suggested that Paul Butters at Shropshire Council should be contacted to see what could be done with regard to re-surfacing green lanes. **Action: Mike to contact**

Rob asked whether this project is being developed with partners as there is a need to understand how sediment is moving through the catchment and cited recent work undertaken by LLL on sediment apportionment in the Upper Clun. Liz commented that members of the Clun Steering Group and Field Officers have informed this project. **Action: Rob and Liz to liaise**

Ken asked if the funding will be used for in-channel or land works, Liz suggested that ideally for measures to prevent/address runoff at source e.g. by tree planting, but could also be used for sediment capture and tracks.

Mike commented that he had recently met with technicians from Shropshire Council Highways Team and that they have a lot of knowledge relating to highway runoff and were keen to work with the AONB. **Action: Mike - this is will be pursued via WREN or other funds**

Woodland planting and SFP/BPS was mentioned and the uncertainty about whether payments will be lost on land planted with trees **Action: Mike to check**

g) Natural England

The Action Plan for the Clun Nutrient Management Plan is in draft form but has stalled due to problems with the Wye Action Plan.

Details of the New Countryside Stewardship Scheme are slowly emerging. John commented that there is possibility of those farms in ESA not going to be targeted by the new scheme.

Ken commented that advice and capital funding via Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative (Water Grant) will still be available for this year.

h) AONB

Mike reported that WREN project is on track to launch April and are currently recruiting for a Project Officer to deliver this project. Capital funds will be available for catchment wide projects and for targeted projects associated with Recovery Sites.

The question of extending designation was raised. Natural England have previously commented: that extending designation is extremely unlikely, but cannot be ruled out (as with any designated site in England).

Phil reported on Farmscoper, Mervin and Carol have recently had a Farmscoper visit and respectively commented that it was a broad-brush approach and that local knowledge was important. Phil said it was developed as policy tool but useful to trial at the farm scale.

i) Shropshire Council

Alison reported on planning/development in the Clun. Once the Clun Nutrient Management Plan (Action Plan) is complete it should free up the process (see para g also).

Alison also reported that Environmental Network Mapping is available on SC website.

This led on to a discussion about protected species (white-clawed crayfish). Lots of records in the Clun, but data is quite old. The River Redlake, the Folly Brook and Riddings Brook are known to have supported populations recently, but signal crayfish are known to be in the Onny.

4. Severn River Basin Management Plan Consultation

Mike is due to submit the Catchment Partnership's response the River Basin Management Plan Consultation. The outcome of River Basin Management Plan consultations will be available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/update-to-the-draft-river-basin-management-plans>

As part of the consultation response, Mike summarised the WFD status of the 8 water bodies in the Clun Catchment.

These are as follows:

- Clun - conf Folly Bk to conf R Unk - **Good**
- Clun - conf R Unk to conf R Teme – **Moderate**
- Clun - conf Folly Bk to conf R Unk – **Good**
- Folly Bk - source to conf R Clun – **Good**
- Kemp - source to conf R Clun - **Poor**
- Redlake - source to conf R Clun – **Good**
- Snakescroft Bk- **Good**
- Unk - source to conf R Clun- **Moderate**

Mike queried the good status of the Snakescroft Brook as historically it has been classified as **"Bad"** **Action:** *Liz to investigate the reasons for this*

Mike reported that there are no waterbodies achieving **"High"** status and the long term objective is for the Clun is for 7 waterbodies to achieve **Good** and 1 to achieve **Moderate**. Whether this is an appropriate objective to achieve Favourable Condition for the Clun SAC will be fed back into the Consultation.

5. Clun Catchment Nature Improvement Area (NIA)

A short discussion about the benefits of a locally determined NIA. – A consensus that this may have benefits in terms of targeting Agri-environment funding and that this should be developed further.

Joy commented that the Teme SSSI should be part of the discussion.

6. Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 17th June