

Minutes of the Clun Catchment Partnership Meeting
5th Nov 2014 Aston on Clun Village Hall 10.00am-12.30pm

Attendees:

Joy Greenall	Land, Life & Livelihoods and Farmer
Lucy Roberts	Natural England
Mervin Mullard	Farmer/ NFU and Upper Clun Community Wildlife Group
Mike Kelly	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Phil Holden	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
Adam Shipp	Environment Agency
Neasa Revens	Severn Trent Water
Carol Griffiths	NFU and Farmer
Rob Harris	Land, Life & Livelihoods and Demonstration Test Catchments Programme

Apologies

Fiona Gomersall	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Emma Buckingham	Severn Rivers Trust
Jeff Edwards	Natural England
Leo Smith	Upper Clun Community Wildlife Group
Paul Hayward	Environment Agency
Alison Slade	Shropshire Council
John Croxton	Farmer

1. Notes of last meeting 16th July 2014 and matters arising

Adam reported that EA's LIDAR survey of the upper Clun Catchment was complete. There is a delay in organising data. **Action:** Adam to circulate details when available.

2. Updates

a. NFU

- Carol reported on the recent CSFI workshop focussing on precision farming. A worthwhile event that perhaps should be re-run. Carol suggested that Matt Jones (a local contractor) may be able to demonstrate technology appropriate to the Clun Catchment – **Action:** Feedback to Ken Downward.

b. UCCWG

- Mervin reported that the UCCWG AGM will be held on the 20th Nov. With John Mackintosh of Shropshire Mammal Group as guest speaker.

c. Environment Agency

- Adam reported the River Clun Nutrient Management Plan is now finalised – Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nutrient-management-plan-river-clun>.
- Lucy mentioned the Clun Nutrient Management Plan Action Plan is anticipated for completion by the end of November. It will be an evolving document.
- Ken Downward to circulate a summary document outlining the Nutrient Management Plan process. **Action:** Feedback to Ken Downward.
- The Clun SAC Action Plan – Walkover survey and costing complete – next stage is to develop an Engagement Strategy and undertake project funding bids for Rural SuDS (RSudS) schemes in the catchment.
- The EA/AONB Pearl Mussel Recovery Site survey is complete.
- Adam reported that EA have rearranged area teams and have decided to put all the rivers in Shropshire under one team leader. Paul Hayward is the new EA Team Leader in the Teme Catchment.

d. Natural England

- Lucy reported that Natural England are currently reviewing all HLS agreements in the Clun with respect to possible amendments to help deliver objectives of Nutrient Management Plan.

- Lucy reported on the findings of the Clun SAC survey which and focussed on pearl mussel habitat rather than assessing population size (this followed on from Ian Killeen's 2013 survey). The survey found that there is little suitable pearl mussel habitat due to excessive sediment and algal growth and also due to direct habitat loss through the loss of stabilising/shading riverbank trees. Most pearl mussels are considered to be stressed or moribund.

One area surveyed was found to support pearl mussel habitat and aggregation of some mussels to this location is to be considered. A copy of report was requested by Partnership Members **Action:** Lucy: to circulate

A resurvey of the Clun is scheduled for spring 2015.

- A New Catchment Sensitive Farming Scheme will run during 2015
- A sediment sourcing survey has been commissioned. APEM have been appointed as contractors
- NELMS targeting statements have been circulated for comment (NELMS is now to be called Countryside Stewardship)
- The Clun Site Improvement Plan is now live and available on the AONB website or from <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6216527934128128>

e. **Land, Life and Livelihoods (LLL)**

- Joy reported on a new LLL partnership agreement with the Catchment Sensitive Farming initiative. A number of Farmers' Den events are planned:
 1. Upland Grassland and Soil Management Workshop
 2. Soil aeration machinery event
 3. Basic Payment Scheme and NELMS workshop
- Joy updated the Partnership on the Local History Group work with Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) work in the Clun Forest.
- LLL had a positive meeting with Officers from the Woodland Trust to discuss support for a "Pontbren" type project in the LLL project area.
- Rob updated the Partnership on recent LLL citizen science work, employing volunteers to test for elevated phosphate in the upper catchment. Results were inconclusive, as the sampling equipment was not sensitive enough to detect low levels of phosphate. Concluded that septic tanks appear not to be too much of an issue in the Upper Catchment.
- Rob suggested that LiDAR and SCIMAP could be used to assess overland flows and perhaps walkover surveys should validate the model. Results could influence future tree planting schemes to help intercept flow.
- Rob suggested the Ecosystems Services Mapping of the Teme Catchment undertaken by Severn Rivers Trust and Rivers Trust be circulated to partners. NB This is a very large PDF document and not easily emailed. **Action:** Mike to investigate how this can be made accessible.

f. **Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**

- Mike reported that the three year SITA/NE funded pearl mussel project has now been completed. **Action:** Mike to circulate project summary.
- Mike reported pending signing of contracts, future AONB Partnership Clun work will be focussed on the WREN/WT funded River Clun Recovery Project. This project has two elements:
 1. A catchment wide grant scheme to fund:
 - Riparian restoration/creation
 - Sustainable livestock watering facilities
 - Woodland creation
 - Sediment/nutrient source and pathway attenuation measures
 2. Targeted habitat creation at two pearl mussel recovery sites

- University of Worcester/AONB *Phytophthora*. NERC research project bid has been peer reviewed - will know the outcome Jan 2015.
- Phil reported on receipt of a small grant from NE innovation fund for a project looking at modelling of individual farm economics in relation to catchment management. This work will be developed in partnership with farming organisations. This will link with the "FARMSCOPER" decision support tool for assessing diffuse agricultural pollutant and impacts of mitigation methods. Carol suggested trialling FARMSCOPER with volunteer farmers in the catchment.
- Bid for LEADER "Natural Growth" programme 2015-20 for southern Shropshire – decision expected from Defra by end of November or early December.

g. Shropshire Council

- Phil reported (communicated from Alison Slade) that SAMDeV Plan (Site Allocations and Management of Development) is going to Examination in Public, the first hearing session will take place on Tuesday 11 November. Includes policies affecting development in the Clun Catchment to protect the SAC.

h. Severn Trent Water

- Neasa reported that the STW catchment plan is due for approval by 1st March 2015. Partners enquired whether Phosphate stripping was included in the plan. It is understood that this is not part of the plan, but subject to separate outcome delivery initiative (ODI).

3. SWT and SC Natural Flood Management Project

Mike attended a recent workshop on the launch of this county-wide initiative. *"The Shropshire Natural Flood Management Project aims to use the drive to alleviate flooding to explore the challenges of delivering truly integrated catchment management"*. There are seven candidate sub-catchments including Hopesay in the Clun Catchment. The Natural Flood Management Project has synergies the aims of the Clun Catchment Partnership and is supportive of the multiple benefits such an approach delivers.

4. Update to the River Basin Management Plans - Consultation Response

This is the third of three Environment Agency consultations for River Basin Management Plans.

Action: Mike to make a response and circulate to Partnership for comment before final submission date 10th April 2015.

5. A possible 'locally determined' Clun Catchment Nature Improvement Area

The partnership held a further discussion session, looking at some slides with information and maps, regarding a potential 'locally determined' Clun Nature Improvement Area (NIA) and the likely pros and cons if adopted. This was not a restrictive designation, but could help to give recognition to the importance of the whole catchment, and strengthen future bids for funding. It would not be onerous to create - the Partnership could do this, though endorsement from the county Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is desirable - and it could give the Partnership a focus for its work.

Two possible areas were discussed - a whole Clun Catchment NIA and Clun Uplands NIA, the latter based on Less Favoured Areas (LFA). Being over 10,000ha and coherent ecological units, either would fit the model for NIAs. The Partnership was generally supportive of the NIA concept and felt that that a whole Clun Catchment NIA was preferable (this is the area covered by the Partnership currently).

Joy further suggested that consideration be given to including Llanfair Waterdine parish (not in the Clun Catchment) which has recently been incorporated into the LLL area.

The partnership supported a grassroots (maybe farmer led) approach, as with some other NIAs, and taking forward the proposal in small steps dependent on resources with further discussion.

Members requested more details of the Defra criteria for locally determined NIAs. **Action:** Mike to circulate. These can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criteria-to-apply-when-identifying-nature-improvement-areas>.

6. Date of Next Meeting: 25th February 2015