

## Stour Catchment Initiative Delivery Group Meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

14:00 – 16.00

MS Teams

### Invitees

<b>Catchment Partnership Chair</b>	Fiona Bowles	FB
<b>Catchment Partnership Co-ordinator</b>	Natalie Poulter	NP
<b>Catchment Partnership Support Officer</b>	Caitlin Quilty	CQ
<b>Dorset Wildlife Trust</b>	Amanda Broom, Nicki Brunt	-
<b>Wessex Water</b>	Lydia O'Shea	LOS
<b>South West Water</b>	Saška McGrath	-
<b>Dorset Council</b>	Natural Environment Team: Annabel King, Ali Quinney FCRM: Chris Osborne, Andrew Probeta	AQ -
<b>BCP Council</b>	Mark Holloway	MH
<b>Natural England</b>	Doug Kite, Emma Tomlin	ET
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Keith Calder, Luke Kozak	KC
<b>National Trust</b>	Ellie Egan	EE
<b>Litter Free Coast and Sea</b>	Matilda Manley	-
<b>Riverfly partnership</b>	Angus Menzies	-
<b>National Farmers Union</b>	Louise Stratton	-
<b>FWAG SW</b>	Nicola Hopkins, Tim Bowden	NH
<b>Catchment Sensitive Farming</b>	Tom Hicks	-
<b>Farmer representative</b>	James Cossins	-
<b>East Dorset Environment Partnership</b>	Hilly Chittenden	HC
<b>Wessex Rivers Trust</b>	Jon Bass, Alex Deacon	JB, AD
<b>Fjordir consultancy</b>	Antony Firth	AF
<b>TerraFlows artist</b>	Alison Summers-Bell	-
<b>Correspondence members</b>		
<b>RSPB</b>	Renny Henderson	-
<b>Natural England</b>	Nikki Hiorns, Nick Squirrell	-
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Aly Maxwell, Kath Burt, Sarah Healy, Simon Hills, Nicol Sellick,	AM, SH, NS
<b>Wessex Rivers Trust</b>	Matt Irvine	-
<b>Forestry Commission</b>	Ian Briscoe, James Fry, Leanne Sargeant, Kate Tobin, Jon Burgess, Zac Sibthorpe	ZS

### Apologies:

Annabel King, Dorset Council  
Leanne Sargeant, Forestry Commission  
Ian Briscoe, Forestry Commission  
Sarah Healy, Environment Agency

Amanda Broom, Dorset Wildlife Trust  
Nicki Brunt, Dorset Wildlife Trust  
Kate Tobin, Forestry Commission  
Luke Kozak, Environment Agency

Chris Osborne, Dorset Council  
Louise Stratton, NFU  
Tim Bowden, FWAG SW

Angus Menzies, Riverfly  
James Cossins, Farmer representative  
Doug Kite, Natural England

**Additional invitees:**

Vicky Farwig, Wessex Water (VF)  
Simon Brown, Landstary consultants (SB)

**1. Welcome & introductions**

Support Officer Caitlin Quilty was welcomed to the group, as well as new representatives Emma Tomlin (Natural England), Nicol Sellick (Environment Agency) and Zac Sibthorpe (Forestry Commission), and guests Vicky Farwig (Wessex Water) and Simon Brown (Landstary). Ellie Egan was welcomed back after returning from furlough.

Partners were encouraged to get in touch with Caitlin and introduce themselves.

**Actions from the last meeting 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

Who	Action	Progress
DB	Share heat map for Dorset Stour when it is completed.	Not yet ready
NP	Arrange meeting with EnTrade and appropriate partners to discuss potential for developing opportunities for accessing & benefitting from catchment market in the Stour headwaters.	Project not ready; action carried forward
TH/NH/others:	Please flag anything to NP which might already be known in relation to Dichlorvos appearing in the Pimperne Brook.	Investigated by EA- error in data point.
NP	Follow up with relevant WxW staff about investigations/removal programmes of chemicals driving failures across both catchments, likelihood of contaminated sludge being spread in catchment etc.	Carry forward
LOS	Follow up on permits for e.g. mercury at Christchurch to see if these older permit levels are still appropriate given WxW's modern practices and higher performance level.	Complete
NP	Please forward any questions relating to the WFD data to NP to co-ordinate for discussion with the EA.	None sent
All	GIS project- Interested partners to please contact Natalie with ballpark figures to help guide procurement and express interest. Expressions of interest please by 23 <sup>rd</sup> October.	In progress
NP	Follow up existing/planned EA opportunity mapping with Gemma Mahoney.	In progress
All	Please contribute any feedback you would like included in the CP Forestry Design Plan response. Deadline for inclusion 21 <sup>st</sup> October.	Complete

Updates from actions:

- NP- EnTrade are progressing Catchment Markets in other catchments at present and expect to begin work on the Stour later in 2021; NP will continue to liaise with the Entrade team to ensure the heat map is shared & the actioned meeting happens at an appropriate time in the market's development.

- KC- The Dichlorvos data point in the Pimperne has been analysed by the EA and found to be an error reading. The data has been corrected to reflect no issue here with regards to Dichlorvos.
- LOS- There isn't a mercury permit for Christchurch & WxW compliance team have no record of there having been one. There has previously been a short-term permit for heavy metals in Christchurch Harbour, but this was revoked in 2003 as part of a routine review.
- NP- The GIS project has been difficult to progress because of workload & resources; these issues are now easing & the project is being prioritised, particularly with regard to the water layers to feed into the LNP Ecological Network Mapping

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and approved.

## 2. Floodplain Meadows project update (AF)

Fjordr have previously done work on historic water courses within the Stour (the outputs of this are available via NP on request). One key feature for further exploration was 'funnel-shaped meadows', which are bounded by the river and have a distinctive funnel-shaped track access which links to drove roads. These meadows were divided among local communities for growing hay, and were grazed as common land after the hay cut. These date from the medieval period (or earlier) but are still present as landscape features (with different uses). Several were identified in the Stour, and the Colne in Devon.

In August 2020 the Floodplain Meadows Partnership commissioned Fjordr in August 2020 to:

- Identify the extent of floodplain meadows on the Stour, how these relate to parishes, medieval populations & hay-based cultural economy, and understand what the potential might be for further research and engagement.
- Develop existing methodology by revisiting 5 parishes on the Stour and then extend to 10 parishes across the Thames tributaries.

Study area included middle Stour parishes of Hinton St Mary & Sturminster Newton, down to Hanford & Shillingstone. Using tithe maps & LiDAR & flood extent mapping, as well as field names (e.g. Mead), Fjordr were able to identify the relics of meadows, including some not seen in previous work.

The form & evidence of many of these meadows still exists even where the current land use is different (e.g. in arable). This has implications for flood risk, biodiversity & carbon sequestration, and could inform the potential of any future restoration of these sites and those like them.

### Discussion

- JB- Interesting distribution of meadows, which don't appear to be linked to settlements. Were these features therefore of wider value? AF- need to be linked to regularly flooded land; meadows were more valuable than arable land in that they provided reliable winter fodder for food animals and animals as power source. The drove roads provided the connection to the settlements. They are connected by parish- i.e. each parish has their own hay meadows.
- AM- This project might be interested in looking at the Stage Zero data which has been produced by the EA, which defines the 'valley bottom floor' as a visualisation of the 'true' floodplain rather than the EA designated flood zone maps.
- AD- There may be potential to compare current land use with former to suggest whether the land could be a candidate for arable reversion, identify potential natural capital benefits etc.

- NH- There is a priority habitats layer in MAGIC GIS (managed by Natural England) that includes Floodplain Grazing Marsh). This data is exportable as layers (Priority Habitat Inventory) which could inform what the habitats are or have potential to be. Caution advised with the accuracy of the data however.
- NH- TH is forming a cluster of farms in the middle Stour, who may be interested in hearing more about this project.

**Action AM:** Contact AF to discuss use of Stage Zero layers for this project's use.

**Action NH/AF:** Put AF in contact with Tom Hicks

### 3. Stour Valley Park update (MH & SB)

MH introduced Simon Brown (SB), consultant Landscape Architect for Landstory Ltd. Landstory have been contracted to work on the Stour Valley Park project through funding from the Future Parks Accelerator, a national scheme run by MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government) and the National Trust. The Stour Valley Park concept has been in development since 2013, but this funding allows the development to be pushed forwards significantly.

SB updated the group on work so far:

- Landstory's role to date has been to support the working group to develop the draft strategy, business case & governance of the Park, & lead on developing a communications plan.
- This has included approx. 15 days of site work to assess the landscape character of the scoped site & understand the strategic opportunities & constraints that might inform the Park's development.
- A variety of targeted engagement has been delivered over the last 12 months, with key stakeholders, landowners and the broader community, which has informed the draft strategy. This has included very positive and open engagement with the angling community. A website with a survey has also been set up, with around 800 people submitting information through the survey.
- Future Parks Accelerator has extended this stage of the project to March 2022 due to Covid 19, which will support greater engagement with stakeholders going forwards.
- The landscape within the park area has been divided into a series of character areas, based on walkover surveys by landscape architect. These characters will be used to inform any interventions or design considerations & constraints as the park concept develops.
- Strategic opportunities and constraints are being mapped & incorporated. Acknowledgement that there is a need to take a strategic look at land use, which includes active travel, access (including for those with disabilities), and understands that BCP do not own, or may not be able to influence use of much of the land within the park area. E.g. a long-distance strategic connection through the length of the park which gives an indicative route for discussion rather than anything finalised, considered, agreed etc. This includes 'blue sky thinking' for things like potential new routes, new river crossings. Also understanding that recreation points need to consider 'treading lightly' in the environment as well as providing opportunities for people.
- An overview of the project is available online at [www.stourvalleypark.uk](http://www.stourvalleypark.uk), along with a survey through which partners' feedback is welcomed.

Discussion:

- FB- How far has river restoration planning got? SB- not well developed at this stage; Landstory have had conversations with AM around the lower Stour Restoration Plan & been advised that it is out of date & being updated currently. Project team acknowledges that much of the land is out of the project's control/ownership, so being careful not to be prescriptive of interventions or land-use changes before landowners have been engaged. Partners including FWAG will be important in supporting & facilitating that engagement & developing those aspects of the project.
- FB- Would it be possible to develop plans further on land of known ownership (e.g. National Trust land) & public land which could provide opportunities to show examples of the kind of work that the project might be looking to engage private landowners on? What is the timescale for that? SB- Agree public assets are 'low hanging fruit' in this sense, but are tenanted, golf courses, Water Recycling Centres etc, so still not necessarily easy wins, but may have innovative solutions (e.g. 'stacked' environments which deliver biological wastewater treatment, public space and wildlife benefits).
- MH- Hoping to fund a piece of work (working with AF) to fund heritage in further depth, particularly with a view to interpretation & education, allied with the river's ecology. Health & wellbeing is an important feature of the developing project.
- AF- Also relating to morphology & educating about how rivers do/should work and how we can live with rivers for greater benefit.
- FB- Keen that access considerations are not developed too far ahead of river improvement opportunities, especially given that 'making space for water' is being considered to a greater extent within (e.g.) Local Plans.
- JB- When will the outcomes (i.e. summary conclusions) from public meetings be circulated/released? SB- Coming soon. Have been sent out to workshop attendees and are now being analysed for incorporation into the strategy.

**Action SB:** Confirm timescale for circulating summary themes & conclusions from public & stakeholder engagement sessions, and circulate these in due course.

#### 4. Drainage & Wastewater Management Plans (DWMP) update (VF)

Vicky Farwig, Flood Risk Co-ordinator, Wessex Water

DWMP is the water industry's long-term plan for investment in infrastructure to serve demand and deliver environmental commitments. Working in partnership is a key element of this.

Plans will be delivered at different levels of detail:

- Level 1- high level strategy
- Level 2- breaks down to catchment partnership area level
- Level 3- detail to sewage treatment catchments to identify infrastructure investments required by the company.

The plan will report against some common objectives nationally (listed with more detailed information here: [www.water.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/BRAVA-planning-objectives-for-the-first-cycle-of-DWMPs.pdf](http://www.water.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/BRAVA-planning-objectives-for-the-first-cycle-of-DWMPs.pdf)), as well as some WxW specific objectives highlighted by stakeholders. The WxW-specific metrics include partnership working, amount of environment (e.g. km of river) improved and sustainable drainage.

Phase 1 of the plan production has now been completed. This has entailed:

- A high level risk-based catchment screening task, which identified 228 of 399 catchments (covering approx. 99% of the population) in the WxW region to be progressed for more detailed assessment. Stakeholders were then asked to input their priority areas and these have been highlighted in the plan as priority areas for partnership working (includes locations in BCP area, Wimborne, Dorchester and the Frome downstream of Dorchester amongst the Dorset areas highlighted).
- Baseline Risk & Vulnerability Assessment (BRAVA) carried out, which looks at how measures are likely to change with future pressures and how this impacts what needs to be planned in.

Draft outputs from national planning objectives were presented (see presentation for detail).

- Internal sewer flooding- no significant issue with this (statistically, across the Dorset catchments when compared against the national scale)
- Pollution incidents- these are mapped by severity of incident across the last 3 years
- Sewer collapses- average number of incidents from the last 3 years mapped
- Population at risk of sewer flooding in a 50 year storm- baseline (current risk) & forecast mapped.
- Wastewater treatment quality compliance- baseline & forecast mapped
- Storm overflow performance- baseline & forecast mapped.

This mapping has highlighted areas which need more detailed planning. Additional work has been carried out to characterise the problems in terms of complexity & how difficult they would be to solve.

Links to catchment partnerships:

- Options development & appraisal is now beginning. Options being considered for resolving issues identified through the planning process include customer management (e.g. rainwater harvesting), surface water management (e.g. SuDS), combined foul & surface water sewer systems (e.g. traditional storage solutions), wastewater treatment processes (e.g. opportunities to treat/pre-treat in the network, installing wetlands etc), indirect working (e.g. influencing local planning).
- Workshops coming up in the summer- these will provide opportunity to share the BRAVA information and share stakeholders/partners' focus areas & interests for the catchment. They will also be used to discuss where WxW might be able to work together with partners on addressing issues.
- Priority locations relevant to the Stour are Gillingham, Wimborne, Holdenhurst, Mere, Tarrant Crawford, Kinson. Feedback on these welcomed. Any others? What level of engagement do people want, how, time commitments etc. VF will work with NP to make sure catchment partnership engagement is continued and appropriate to make best use of the workshops.

Discussion

- FB- How does this link to Storm Overflow investigations? VF- Separate programme, but there will be cross-links and alignments between them.
- KC- Interested in the process & keen to get involved.
- SB- Good to see SuDS involved in this plan & can see links to Stour Valley Park plans. Would be good to link up to discuss further.
- FB- How do broader scale catchment management plans link in? VF- This is first iteration, so there's no pre-determined mechanism. There is definitely scope for shaping this and making good links together.

- FB- How much is the sewer flooding metric influenced by catchment issues rather than internal (domestic) sewer flooding? VF- There is discussion nationally about the applicability of this metric, but it does include foul network and surface water network. There is more work to do to develop integrated models.
- AF- Fjordr have been looking at the river Culm in Devon and looking at historic features used to direct flow which have been impacted/alterd by modern features, e.g. a modern road crossing an old leet. Has this kind of analysis been included in the DWMPs? VF- This is a significant element of the day job for flood risk management, especially surface flooding, but DWMP work is not advanced enough to bring in the historic information at this point; it could be considered in future iterations. Will be working with BCP & incorporating their integrated flood risk models to identify correlations between their and WxW's hotspots.
- ET- Would be keen to look at the sites identified as priorities to see whether there is correlation with designated sites that are known to have flood problems.
- SH- How will this plan be taken forwards once it's written? E.g., will it unlock funding for work within WxW's core programme, or be used to inform the next business plan period etc? VF- The final DWMP will be put into the PR24 business plan, which will influence the amount of funding WxW are allocated for the 2025-2030 business plan period. This is likely to mean a significant requirement for investment and will be considered nationally alongside elements such as customers' willingness/ability to pay for water.

**Action VF:** Contact AF and ET to continue discussion and involve with improving information base.

## 5. Stour fisheries update

Moved to partner updates & questions/comments invited in item 8.

## 6. Co-ordinator update

Innovation in Flooding & Coastal Resilience application by BCP & DC

- EOI for the Dorset-wide surface water bid to the Innovation in Flooding & Coastal Resilience Fund went in (many thanks again to all that have input to it).
- We expect the announcement some time in March on which approx. 25 proposals have been selected nationally to move to next stage of developing full business case.

RBMP catchment pages

- Now submitted to Keith for inclusion in the national document; thanks to those who contributed to this.

Consultations

- BCP Climate Action plan consultation live- until March 1<sup>st</sup>
- Dorset Council Local Plan consultation live- until March 15<sup>th</sup>

West Country Water Resources Group

- Both Poole Harbour Rivers & Dorset Stour have been put forwards as priority catchments for detailed study in developing a regional water resources plan.
- Next steps- WCWRG will be working with EA Catchment Co-ordinators to identify key stakeholders & begin to workshop the plans; NP will work with Keith on this.
- Updated resource position statement coming end of February; this will be shared once received. NP is liaising with the group to ensure the CP is appropriately engaged, and support stakeholder engagement where we can.

Catchment Partnership newsletter

- Distributed 22/02/21; please advise if you'd like to be added/removed from the mailing list for this.
- Looking to improve the format based on feedback from partners. A short survey has been included in the latest newsletter to gather this feedback and help shape the content & format going forwards.

**Action all:** Please provide comments & points for inclusion in consultation responses as well as partner submissions for BCP Climate Action Plan (by Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February) & Dorset Council Local Plan (by Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March)

## 7. Chair update

Chalk streams are currently in sharp focus nationally, in the press as well as in industry groups.

- A chalk summit was held in Autumn 2020, and CaBA have set up a chalk streams working group. The working group's remit is to review the issues around chalk rivers achieving good condition & feed back to Environment Minister Rebecca Pow to ensure progress can be made.
- May influence funding in the long term, or regulators' attitudes to how chalk rivers are protected. Report is due end of March.

Beavers

- Dorset Beaver Working Group latest meeting 11/12/2020; minutes available via NP.
- DWT released 2 beavers in the enclosed trial site in the Frome headwaters on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. A monitoring plan has been developed with WxW and University of Exeter. Details published on DWT website. If any partners are aware of anyone in the Stour catchment with interest in beavers or looking to develop a beaver project, please put them in touch with the CP team to engage with the beaver working group & join the discussions around suitable beaver management.

CaBA monitoring co-operative

- The catchment monitoring co-operative proposal will be put forward for funding this spring. Seeking funding (£5million) for a range of citizen science to develop long-term co-ordinated monitoring to supplement the reducing amount of monitoring being done by statutory agencies.

Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF)

- Announced 10/2/21, this fund has potential for developing project pipelines against future public/private finance investments. Are partners aware of, or planning to investigate opportunities for either common interests or separate bids for this fund? Join up is encouraged in order to present a co-ordinated opportunity for Dorset.

## 8. Matters arising from partner updates

- FB- Re Wessex RT update: what measure of condition is being considered for walkover surveys? AD- Level of degradation in river habitat & grading on a poor-high scale to inform where work should be prioritised. Includes through man-made modifications which may be causing obstructions, impoundments etc.
- FB- re Environment Agency update on lower Stour restoration plan: there is a comment in the update about 'engagement once project begins'. Can SH clarify? SH- for clarity, 'begins' relates to development rather than delivery. To confirm, the Agency is keen to work with partners to understand where there are opportunities to deliver multiple benefits for biodiversity, as well as flood risk, and use nature-based solutions where appropriate. The early work has involved developing updated flood risk maps for the lower Stour which has produced some changes to the flood extent maps. These maps are soon to be published online, but SH has these as PDFs if partners would find this useful.

- AM- re Stour Fisheries update: Bristol Avon RT have been using an eDNA technique to rapidly monitor where different species are able to get to on the river Chew, to assess issues around migration & habitat suitability. Are Wessex RT looking at this as a technique on the Stour? JB- planning to raise this for a short discussion at the Poole Harbour fisheries meeting 24/2, but agree it looks interesting as a technique.

**9. Any other business**

**Date of next meeting-** Mid May; doodle poll to follow.

**Theme of next meeting-** TBC, to include outdoor site visit- suggestions welcomed.

**Actions Summary**

Who	Action
David Baxter	Carried forward- Share heat map for Dorset Stour when it is completed.
NP	Carried forward- Arrange meeting with EnTrade and appropriate partners to discuss potential for developing opportunities for accessing & benefitting from catchment market in the Stour headwaters.
NP	Follow up with relevant WxW staff about investigations/removal programmes of chemicals driving failures across both catchments, likelihood of contaminated sludge being spread in catchment etc.
AM	Contact AF to discuss use of Stage Zero layers for this project's use.
NH	Put AF in contact with Tom Hicks
SB	Confirm timescale for circulating summary themes & conclusions from public & stakeholder engagement sessions, and circulate these in due course.
VF	Contact AF and ET to continue discussion and involve with improving information base.
All	Please provide comments & points for inclusion in consultation responses as well as partner submissions for BCP Climate Action Plan (by Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> February) & Dorset Council Local Plan (by Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March)
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