

**EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP****MANAGEMENT GROUP MINUTES****Committee Suite, County Hall, Exeter****2pm Thursday 14 March 2016****Present:**

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Chair: Councillor Bernard Hughes OBE, DCC | Cllr Ted Hockin, TDC             |
| Cllr Michael Howe, EDDC                   | Cllr Pat A Graham, ETC           |
| Cllr Margaret Baldwin, ECC                | Cllr Andrew Cadbury, SPC         |
| Cllr Martin Wrigley, DTC                  | Lynn Trout, Forum Vice Chair     |
| Neil Downes, Forum Chair                  | Steve Edmonds, EDDC              |
| Peter Chamberlain, DCC                    | Suzanna Hughes, SPC              |
| Graeme Smith, TDC                         | Katherine Stephenson, D&SIFCA    |
| Colin Acton, ECC                          | Lord Courtenay, Powderham Estate |
| Neil Harris, Delivery Officer             | Humphrey Clemens, TDC            |
| Stephanie Clark, EEMP                     | Lucy Radford, DCC                |

**1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence:**

- BH welcomed those present and introductions were made. LR took the minutes.
- Apologies were noted from: Cllr Terry Lowther, DTC; Cllr Graham Murrin, WPC; Mandy Westlake, WPC; Nik Ward, Natural England; Hugh Davey, Environment Agency; Gavin Bloomfield, RSPB; Alan Wood, RYA; Lisa Bowman, ETC; Ann Tipper, DTC; Andy Bakere, Devon Wildlife Trust.

**2. Management Group Vice Chair Election**

- Ted Hockin was nominated as Vice Chair by Humphrey Clemens. The Management Group supported the nomination and agreed on the election of Ted Hockin as Vice Chair of the MG.

**3. Minutes and Action Log of Previous Meeting – BH**

- Minutes from previous MG meeting were agreed as an accurate record and signed by BH.
- Actions from previous meeting discussed (see Action Log).

**4. Budget update 2015/16 – PC**

- PC gave an update of the budget to the group. SC circuited a sheet showing the budget, but will send the group an updated version following the meeting. There has been less expenditure than first predicted, due to additional funding brought in by SC, with approximately £4,000 less spent on partnership activities. The initial estimated underspend of approximately £17,500 now stands at approximately £21,279.
- The cost of the Management Plan will come from next financial year's budget.
- PC explained that all partners are happy for the underspend to be carried over into next financial year's budget.
- There is a planned income of £25,000 from Partner contributions next financial year.
- GS stated that there is reasonable assumption that TDC will contribute to the partnership next financial year and they hope to confirm soon. HC agreed.

- Cost for employing the Estuary Officer amounts to at least £38,000.
- Therefore, we should have a balanced budget next financial year, with approximately £8,000 for spend.
- A Funding Strategy will be completed this year and a plan will need to be made for the 2017/18 budget.
- BH suggested it will be a good idea to send out letters to smaller funding partners, e.g. Parish Councils, explaining about the budget for 17/18 and to explore whether funders contributions might be increased, as they have stayed the same for several years.
- PC suggested that this could be considered in the Funding Strategy and perhaps SC could contact Clerks informally for next year.
- BH also suggested looking to sponsors to contribute to the festival this year.

**ACTION:** SC to include additional / increased Parish Council contributions in Funding Strategy.

**ACTION:** SC to approach sponsors to contribute to the festival this year.

## 5. Progress Report

### a. Exe Estuary Officer progress against Action Plan – SC

SC gave a summary of the work that she has been involved with since the last meeting:

- Bait Collection Disturbance Literature Review draft: SC is working with Natural England with the next draft being produced in the next two weeks.
- Bird Screen photo has been sent out with a press release via the DCC media team, to be public after 16<sup>th</sup> March. A replacement migration route panel has been ordered and will be installed by the end of the financial year.
- The Spring Exe Press is to be sent out by 16<sup>th</sup> March.
- Spring Clean-Up planned for 7<sup>th</sup> May at 1pm; Autumn Clean-Up planned for 17<sup>th</sup> September at 1pm.
- Summer Festival - Exmouth Town Council are holding a Mussel Festival possibly on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. SC asked the group whether they would be happy for the partnership to work with ETC on a joint festival. The group agreed that this would be a good idea, on the condition that it isn't branded purely as the Mussel Festival.

**ACTION:** SC to meet with ETC and work on a joint festival, ensuring that it is co-branded as Spirit of the Exe and the Mussel Festival. SC to also explore whether the festival can make a profit.

- Other suggestions for future festivals included:
  - Dawlish Warren in 2017, to promote the tidal defence work being carried out on site.
  - Powderham Estate, to promote cycling.
- Bird Disturbance – there are two volunteers carrying out surveys of the disturbance of birds from activities at Dawlish Warren. There may be further volunteers to assist in the future.
- School Sessions at Exmouth have been set between May and July. SC is currently in discussions with Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership to look at whether free train trips for schools on the Avocet Line can be arranged outside of peak times.

### b. Partner progress against Management Plan - Updates from Partners

D&SIFCA gave a summary of the projects that they are involved in:

- There has been a review of the Bass legislation, summarised on the MMO website.

**ACTION:** KS to send SC a summary of the Bass legislation review to send to the MG.

- D&SIFCA will be surveying mussel beds in April, SC has agreed to help.
- Exmouth Mussels will try culture of mussels on Bull Hill, as hairy ropes didn't work.

- Crab tile survey is carried out every four years. The last one was carried out in 2012, which means a survey is due this year. Looking to use drones to survey the area.  
SC: In contact with a drone company that are interested in doing a trial exercise on the Exe. May be interested in carrying out survey.
- GS: Regional Coastal Monitoring – georeferencing – through TDC.

**ACTION:** SC to contact drone company to discuss surveying crab tiles as a trial exercise.

## **6. Update on Coastal Communities Team – SC**

SC gave an update on the Coastal Communities Team (CCT), which aims to encourage, promote and bring economic rewards to businesses that support local fisheries.

- The Economic Plan was completed and submitted at the end of January.
- SC has received some interest from fishermen and anglers, including Exmouth Mussels.
- Local Fisheries Report / Scoping Study are still being worked on by the Devon Maritime Forum on behalf of the EEMP. The planned work is slightly behind schedule due to illness, with outstanding work including meetings, report, mailing out of the questionnaire and an event.

## **7. Winter Forum Feedback – SC**

SC gave a presentation of the Winter Forum feedback, including a summary of the presentations and the new Exe-Change section:

- 82 people that attended the Forum.
- Exmouth Town Council kindly paid for the refreshments.
- There were only five people that completed feedback forms, however, the feedback that was given was very positive.
- All feedback from the event has been sent to the MG and will be on the EEMP website.

## **8. Draft Management Plan 2016 – SC**

- The MP is still in draft form.
- Members of the Forum took part in an exercise to inform the objectives of the new MP. The results have been sent out to the MG and will be available on the EEMP website.
- The design of the MP will be similar to the State of the Exe Estuary 2014, since they are sister documents. Pollards Print have initially been contacted, since they designed and produced the State of the Exe, and have quote just over £1000 for 40 copies.
- As well as input from the Forum, SC will be incorporating Ecosystem Services into the MP. SC is also awaiting a response from some Partners on the review of the old MP and is also awaiting advice from the MMO on the South Area Marine Plans. Therefore, the first draft is not ready to be sent to partners at the moment.
- SC read over the timeframe of the MP to be produced. PC asked whether the MG would be happy to revise the timeframe.
- GS suggested having the final MP ready for the next Winter Forum. The group agreed.

**ACTION:** SC to prepare a new timeframe to have the final Management Plan completed by the Winter Forum 2017.

## **9. Final Memorandum of Agreement – PC**

- PC explained amendments have been made to the MoA. PC directed attention to page 7, where various dates have been amended to reflect budget planning. A rolling agreement has also been added, with detail that can be added in Appendix 1.
- The appendices have been simplified.

- The MoA explains what the MG and OWG does.
- PC asked the MG for any comments by the end of the week. Unless comments are received, we will send a final version of the MoA to all Partners to sign. MG agreed this and approved in principle.

#### **10. ECC Harbour Revisions and setting up a Port User Group (PUG) as a sub-committee under the EEMP – CA**

- CA gave an overview of how ECC are seeking powers from the Department for Transport to make Harbour Directions. CA explained that this is all about port marine safety groups and compliance. An email was distributed to the MG before the meeting which briefly explained this.
- CA asked whether the MG would facilitate a sub-committee (or a PUG) to consult with users.
- LT expressed her lack of confidence in Harbour Directions. She also suggested that the Exe Estuary Users Group should be considered (with a next meeting pencilled in for 21<sup>st</sup> March).
- GS stated that ECC would have a duty to set up a PUG, but not take advice from. EEMP would not be the vehicle to run a PUG, but it could be a Secretariat. The group should be specific to navigational issues and enforcement within the harbour.
- BH agreed with GS that the EEMP could perform a Secretariat role.
- PC suggested that facilitating would be a practical role for the EEMP.
- LT supported this.
- BH: Objectives should be clear and simple.
- GS: All three LAs should have a seat at the table.
- BH: Parish Councils should be represented by District Councils.
- CA: Advert is going into three papers this week. Is happy with the suggestions and will take back to Roger Crane.

#### **11. Any other business**

##### **a. Radio 1 Big Weekend and potential issues on the Exe – CC**

- Big events often result in a lot of boats on the water. Due to the size of this event, CC has concerns over the safety aspects of this and asked the group whether anything should be done.
- CA: ECC has interest in antisocial behaviour, so will monitor this.

##### **b. Bull Hill Erosion – SC**

- Ian Townhend who used to run the research at HR Wallingford (independent research and consultancy in civil engineering, environmental hydraulics & the management of water & the water environment) is hoping to get an MSc student to look at possible causes of the Bull Hill erosion and to forecast the estuary-wide consequences were it to erode a lot more.
- John Goss-Custard plans to regularly to record the time at which Bull Hill first exposes on the receding tide ('topping time') to compare it with the topping time of a place/mussel bed which is most unlikely to have eroded.

#### **12. Dates of next Management Group Meetings:**

- 2pm on Wednesday 15 June 2016 – Committee Suite, County Hall
- 2pm on Thursday 15 September 2016 – Committee Suite, County Hall

BH sends his apologies for the MG meeting on 15 June.

#### **13. Proposal for future meeting dates of the MG – SC**

Dates agreed by MG:

- 2pm on Thursday 1 December 2016
- 2pm on Wednesday 1 March 2017