

## EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

### MANAGEMENT GROUP MINUTES

Committee Suite, County Hall, Exeter

2pm Wednesday 15 June 2016



#### Present:

Chair: Councillor Bernard Hughes OBE, DCC  
Neil Downes, Forum Chair  
Peter Chamberlain, DCC  
Graeme Smith, TDC  
Lisa Bowman, ETC  
Gavin Bloomfield, RSPB  
Stephanie Clark, EEMP  
Lucy Radford, DCC

Cllr Ted Hockin, TDC  
Cllr Pat A Graham, ETC  
Cllr Andrew Cadbury, SPC  
Ann Tipper, DTC  
Andrew Stanger, Natural England  
Katherine Stephenson, D&SIFCA  
Alan Wood, RYA

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

- BH welcomed those present and welcomed Andrew Stanger to the meeting. LR took the minutes.
- Apologies were noted from: Cllr Michael Howe EDDC, Cllr Margaret Baldwin ECC, Cllr Terry Lowther DTC, Cllr Martin Wrigley DTC, Colin Acton ECC, Hugh Davey Environment Agency, Neil Harris Delivery Officer, Cllr Graham Murrin WPC, Lynn Trout Forum Vice Chair, Steve Edmonds EDDC, Suzanna Hughes SPC, Mandy Westlake WPC, Lord Courtenay Powderham Estate, Emily Stallworthy Devon Wildlife Trust.

#### 2. Minutes and Action Log of Previous Meeting

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

#### 3. Budget update 2016/17 – PC

- PC gave an update of the budget to the group. SC circulated a sheet showing the budget.
- There will be a carry forward of £27,930 to this financial year, which is approximately £6,500 more than predicted at the previous MG meeting, due to the contribution towards my salary through the CCT fund and other savings made by SC. However, there may be an issue with the budget for next financial year, as Partners contributions do not cover the Exe Estuary Officer salary, before even taking into account project spend. Therefore, there is the need to put together a funding strategy this financial year to identify additional funds, but there is a risk that this may not happen. SC proposed a budget for predicted expenditure for 2016-17, based on spending all available budget for the year. PC asked whether the MG were happy to take this approach or whether they would like to see some of the £14,943 budget held back to be carried forward to next year as a precaution. It was pointed out that almost all of the project budget would have to be carried forward to cover the costs of the EEO salary, which would be irrational.
- BH explained that from a County point of view, money is getting tighter for partnerships such as this and asked if the Exe Estuary Festival can bring money in. BH also explained that the partnership needs to find funding for its core cost, however we need to be careful in the managing the budget.

- GB asked if it is possible to get money from different activities and whether NE will be funding this year. SC stated that NE has offered a little funding, which will be covered in the next item on the Agenda.
- It was agreed that the partnership should work to the proposed budget spend, with SC to continue to explore opportunities to make savings throughout the year with the potential to identify some carry forward by the end of the year.
- SC explained that the LiCCo project will be undergoing an audit during 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June. This could potentially result in some costs spent on the LiCCo project being questioned or rejected.

#### 4. Update on new Partners / Funding – SC

- RYA will be contributing £200 to the partnership again this year.
- SC still awaiting a decision from DWT about contributing this f/y.
- Powderham Estate stated that they are unable to contribute financially to the partnership this f/y. However, they have offered the use of their estate for the festival in 2017, as a contribution in kind. SC explained that, in line with the MoA, this would mean that Powderham Estate would not have voting rights at MG meetings, since they are not 'Funders'.
- BH said that it would be a good idea to make the festival more of a commercial event and bring in a small income and asked for more help with promoting the event.
- BH asked PC & SC to further explore using the Powderham Estate for the festival, ensuring that further support with organisation, promotion and staging the event could be offered.
- AC suggested that perhaps an income could be generated through on-site parking at the event.
- GS stated that there should be more than just a site offered to be a member of the partnership. It was discussed that the offer to use the site would be for the 2017 festival, therefore, there is an issue with the absence of a contribution for this f/y.

**ACTION:** SC to further explore Powderham Estate's involvement with the EEMP, as outlined in the Minutes.

- TH asked about inviting train companies to the partnership. BH said that there are train companies/partnerships on both sides of the estuary which would have something to offer the partnership. SC said that she is currently exploring these options and has been working with the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership with contributions in kind, including free travel for schools to education sessions, contributions towards the costs of producing the Exe Explorer leaflet, prizes for the festival and advertising of the festival in stations.

**ACTION:** SC to further explore whether rail companies or partnerships are able to contribute to the EEMP.

- AS: Natural England has £750 to contribute towards a project for this financial year and is discussing with SC what this could be spent on. This contribution is not for core activities.

#### 5. Funding opportunities

SC offered two funding opportunities for the MG to consider taking forward.

- a) The Coastal Communities Fund is now open for applications, with a deadline of the end of June for expressions of interest, with a stage 2 full application invited at the end of August. The next round of applications will be invited in autumn. The applications are for £50,000 to £4 million and need to relate to the economic development of coastal communities. It was stated that this round was focussed on delivering projects that involved capital and jobs, but applications have to have planning permission secured. SC suggested that a bid could be submitted that links to the Exe Estuary CCT, as the application requests support from a CCT.

It was asked if the MG were happy for SC to look into this for June or in the autumn. PC said that the CCF is a good opportunity to explore, however it would be difficult to put together an expression of interest by the end of June, so suggested that it would probably be best to apply in the next round in the autumn. PC also suggested that the DMF take a lead on a joint application to reduce pressure on SC. The MG agreed both of these points, with GS pointing out that a stronger application could be put together once the Exe Estuary Fisheries Report was complete (the CCT report that the DMF is undertaking on behalf of the EEMP). It was stated that if DMF lead, it is important to ensure that elements that are useful for the EEMP are included in the project. Another suggestion put forward was the inclusion of an Exe Estuary Interpretation Centre, as long as there is a clear employment outcome. However, projects need to be “shovel ready” to be successful.

- b) The HLF bid was suggested by SC as a good route to apply for funds to support a ‘Friends of the Exe Estuary’ group. The application would include funding for a paid facilitator role, to coordinate volunteers and explore a self-sustaining system for the group to continue into the future. If the MG is happy, BH is happy to support this, as there is an interest from the public.

- The incident involving two volunteers getting stuck in the mud at the spring clean-up was discussed, with SC assuring the MG that there are sufficient safety measures in place that the Health and Safety team at DCC are happy with. PG suggested that there is a need to have signs at Camperdown Gut, indicating the hazardous mud in that area of the estuary.

**ACTION:** PG to look into having a sign installed at Camperdown Gut to warn of the hazardous mud in that area of the estuary.

- c) GB stated that he will let SC know of any Interreg projects that could involve the EEMP.

## 6. Progress Report – SC

### a) Exe Estuary Officer progress against Action Plan

- The Bait Collection Disturbance Literature Review: the next draft is aimed be back to SC from AS at the end of June for feedback.
- The Summer Exe Press will be distributed by 21<sup>st</sup> June.
- The spring clean-up took place on 7<sup>th</sup> May amd the autumn clean-up is planned for 17<sup>th</sup> September.
- The Wildfowlers litter pick took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, the EEMP helped to organise litter pick and funded refreshments (with DWT & ECC involvement).
- The summer festival is planned for 24<sup>th</sup> September, at Exmouth Beach & Gardens (opposite the Pavilions). SC is working with the ETC and the Exmouth Mussel Festival, with the event co-branded as the ‘Spirit of the Exe: Exmouth Mussel Festival’. This will be a celebration of the Exe as usual, with a focus on local fish, with the event is being advertised at a number of different places. There will be a charge for stalls at the event, with the aim to cover costs if possible. SC is also looking at selling a signature dish with profits going towards the event, and selling branded merchandise.
- The final version of the MoA has been sent out, SC is still awaiting signatures from some partners. GS explained that Teignbridge will not be signing this as they don’t sign any MoA.
- 2 volunteers from Exeter Uni carried out surveys of disturbance of birds from activities at Dawlish Warren, however they have now finished for the summer. Dawlish Warren Rangers are helping to attract further volunteers and more are needed. A report will be needed to communicate findings and inform management measures in the DW area.
- SC is part way through school sessions in Exmouth, Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership were able to offer free rail travel for schools on the Avocet Line. SC also

gave a talk at an EDDC teacher training day, discussing resources available through the EEMP.

- SC helped with the IFCA Mussel Survey in April at Bull Hill and Cockwood.
- SC has attended a number of meetings, including the East Devon Catchment Partnership, DESWG, EMS OWG, CPN, funding workshops and the Habitat Regulations OWG.
- SC has booked the Winter Forum for the 7<sup>th</sup> February in the Council Chamber.

#### **b) Partner progress against Management Plan – Update from Partners**

- Andrew from NE explained how to use the Conservation Advice Package through a live demonstration of the NE webpage, designed for the use of NE and the relevant authorities. Details of the Exe Estuary SPA are available, with 'advice on operations' available in September (for all activities and interactions).
- The link to the website is: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>
- SC asked how the partnership will be able to use this information, it was explained that this will help identify key issues which will need to be involved in the management plan.

**ACTION:** AS to identify actions and issues from the Conservation Advice Package to feed into the Management Plan.

### **7. Presentations of local Coastal Communities Teams – SC / LB / GS**

- a) SC gave a presentation on Coastal Communities Team for the Exe Estuary:
  - The aim of the project was to explore economic opportunities for local fisheries related businesses.
- b) LB gave a presentation on Coastal Communities Team for Exmouth:
  - The aim of the project was to understand the issues facing Exmouth town.
- c) GS gave a presentation on Coastal Communities Team for Teignbridge:
  - The aim of Newton Abbot's CCT is to draw together most of the key players to identify priorities.
  - Teignbridge & Dawlish CCT already has key players (through the partnership), therefore the focus of the project is to get capital build landing stages to attract passenger ferries to the area.

### **8. Action Plan 2016/17 - SC**

- SC had distributed the Draft Action Plan 2016-17 prior to the meeting. SC went through the summary of actions and the planned budget.
- GS suggested having commercial adverts in the newsletter, for example the Avocet Line.

**ACTION:** OWG to look at whether commercial adverts should be include in the Exe Press newsletter to raise revenue.

- SC explained that she is exploring whether companies will contribute towards the costs of the Exe Activities leaflet, if they are advertised.
- The MG agree the Action Plan.

**ACTION:** SC to send out the final version of the Action Plan 2016-17 to the MG.

## 9. Management Plan Review – PC

- PC explained that there is an updated timescale on the production of the MP, with a final version to be launched at the Winter Forum. Lesley Garlick is working with SC on this.
- PC highlighted key dates for the MG in the Project Plan, including:
  - 9<sup>th</sup> September a consultation version will be produced for agreement at the MG meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> December the final version of the plan to be approved at the MG meeting.
- PC asked the MG how they would like the Forum to be involved in the consultation. ND suggested holding a consultation event for the Forum, with a presentation given to explain the plan and offering an easy way for them to be involved.
- PC explained that there is a need for the OWG to work with SC so that this time scale can be met.

**ACTION:** SC to take on suggestions from MG to involve the Forum in the consultation of the Management Plan.

## 10. Any Other Business

SC read an update on the Exe Port User Group (PUG), provided by LT.

- CC and TH highlighted their concerns about the imbalance of distribution of members on this group. The response was that the geography shouldn't be of too much concern, it is the balance of interests that is the main drive for the membership.
- GB expressed concerns that the PUG wasn't taking environmental aspects and Habitat Regulations into consideration, but it was stated that the PUG has a focus on navigation and that there are other routes that the environment is taken into account, including this group which is an advisory group to ECC.
- The PUG also stated that they would be happy to accept the EEMP's offer as Secretariat. SC stated that they have not yet clarified what this might involve and that clarification is required before agreeing to act as Secretariat. PC stated that the pre-existing structure and trust of the partnership would be of value to the PUG as a facilitator, to avoid any one-sided views. He expressed concerns about how much effort is required, so the group would need further detail of what is being asked. If there is a significant portion of my time needed, there would need to be some kind of funding support. GS said that seeing as they are seeking a service of a neutral broker, this is a service that could be charged for (there are other estuary partnerships that do this). BH suggested SC speaks to himself and the Vice Chairman further about this, and that the group should leave this decision to BH and TH to fit with the timeframe of the PUG. The MG agreed this.

**ACTION:** SC to request further detail about the PUG Secretariat role, with the decision whether to take this on passed to BH and TH.

## 11. Dates of next Management Group Meetings:

- 2pm on Thursday 15 September 2016 – Committee Suite, County Hall
- 2pm on Thursday 1 December 2016 – Committee Suite, County Hall
- 2pm on Wednesday 1 March 2017 – Committee Suite, County Hall