

EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP



MANAGEMENT GROUP MINUTES

Fortesque Room, Committee Suite, County Hall, Exeter

2pm Tuesday 23 June 2015

Present:

Chair: Councillor Bernard Hughes OBE, DCC	Cllr Terry Lowther, DTC
Neil Downes, Forum Chair	Cllr John Humphreys, EDDC
Peter Chamberlain, DCC	Graeme Smith, TDC
Stephanie Clark, EEMP	Steve Edmonds, EDDC
Neil Harris, Delivery Officer	Gavin Bloomfield, RSPB
Katherine Stephenson, D&SIFCA	Cllr Martin Wrigley, DTC

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence:

- BH welcomed those present, and introductions were made. KS took the minutes.

- Apologies were noted from: Aidan Winder (DCC), Cllr Michael Howe (EDDC), Cllr Ted Hockin (TDC), Cllr Pat A Graham (ETC), Cllr Margaret Baldwin (ECC), Cllr Graham Murrin (WPC), Cllr Andrew Cadbury (SPC), Lynn Trout (Forum Vice Chair), Megan Debenham (SPC), Belinda Price (WPC), Tom Manning (Natural England), Hugh Davey (Environment Agency) Colin Acton (ECC), Lisa Bowman (ETC), Ann Tipper (DTC)

- BH stated that Cllr Pat Graham has been awarded an MBE, and extended congratulations on behalf of the Partnership.

ACTION: SC to send letter on behalf of Partnership congratulating Cllr Pat Graham.

2. Minutes and Action Log of previous meeting

Minutes from previous MG meeting were agreed as an accurate record and signed by BH.

3. Budget Update 2014/2015

SC talked through the budget, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

- LiCCo: concluded in February with a balanced budget. Awaiting final confirmation from JTS, who required additional evidence to be sent for some of the expenditure (approx. £19,000).
 - PC stated that this is standard for EU projects, and no fault of the project.

- 2014/15:
 - GB noted that RSPB contribution was not shown on main budget sheet. SC to amend.
 - Carry forward from last year creates cushion for next year, following the end of LiCCo funding.
 - Carry forward from Dawlish Town Council will have to go through a separate process to the rest of the carry forward. This is because there is no MoA for carrying over finances, so permission is needed from each contributor. This permission had not yet been received by DTC.
 - GS: Teignbridge DC currently has no budget line for projected £2,500 contribution, and is looking into the situation.

ACTION: SC to review MOA, as to whether it would be feasible to include a longstanding permission to carry forward funds, and report back at next meeting.

- 2015/16:
 - Carry forward from last year totals approx. £39,000 (including donation from Stuart Line Cruises). A total income of £78,886 is projected, with a carry forward of £16,000 planned for next year.
 - GB wary that planning a large carry forward sends the wrong message to partners, who may become relaxed about providing funding for the next year. GS noted that a small carry forward does provide the opportunity to be used for match funding projects at short notice.
 - SC working on a funding strategy. The final document is due September/October, and will review the future viability of the Partnership and its funding options.

ACTION: SC to look into spending opportunities for the second half of the year, to reduce carry forward if funding for next year looks stable.

4. Funding opportunities for 2015/16

SC gave an update on a variety of funding opportunities that are being looked into for this financial, and the progress that is being made with each application.

- £2,000 secured from Natural England's Innovation Fund for Funding Strategy
- £1,800 received from Natural England's local funding
- Looking into potential new long-term funding partners – Lord Courtenay has shown an interest in joining the Partnership
- Exe Explorer leaflets – 20,000 copies to be funded by National rail, and 20,000 by DCC Sustainable Transport. (EEMP will cover costs of other leaflets e.g. wildlife)
- £2,000 from EA to carry on LiCCo education training (to be delivered in September)
- The bird screen, paid for by donations from Stuart Line, has now been installed with help from EDDC. BH secured DCC Locality funds for path improvements to bird screen. LiCCo funded interpretation boards are also being installed.
- Festival funding
- Potential new Pathfinder Project (Defra)
- Potential SWW communications funding
- In discussions with Stuart Line Cruises as to whether they will collect donations for the Partnership again in the future.

ACTION: Opening event and publicity for bird screen

5. Introduction to Delivery Officer

SC introduced NH, who is based in the Green Infrastructure team at EDDC but hired on behalf of ECC, EDDC & TDC to take forward Mitigation Strategy for development within the EMS. A Joint Committee was formed on behalf of the three councils. Funds are from developer contributions, but EEMP can bid for funds to help Mitigation Strategy (e.g. new patrol vessel for estuary).

BH: patrolling should fall to Port Authority. Main issue is speeding.

GS pointed out that CIL money is to mitigate future problems caused by development, not existing issues.

SC: Greater Exeter Visioning Board (27th July) will hopefully look at Harbour Board duties.

ACTION: SC to report back on Greater Exeter Visioning Board at next meeting.

GB welcomed NH on behalf of the Partnership.

6. Progress Report

a. Exe Estuary Officer progress against Action Plan – SC

Spirit of the Exe Festival: £5,000 Exeter Canal & Quay Trust, £250 received from (Exmoor National Park), support from DCC Sustainable Transport & Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership. Discounted advertising on buses. Great variety of people involved: marine biologists, stunt cyclists, Community Seagrass Initiative, bands, wildlife & heritage tours, treasure hunts for kids.... Donations for prizes have been received e.g. rail tickets from National Rail.

The website content is in the process of being updated, and looking at the possibility of new website design by DCC (free of charge).

Education: LiCCo teacher training days are scheduled for September. Estuary school visits have also be taking place in Exmouth.

The last estuary clean-up was very successful, and MCS litters surveys were completed at the same time. EDDC helped with removal of litter, with use of their 4x4s. EEMP covered cost of buffet for volunteers (usually funded by EA, but they didn't have the funds this year).

Action Plan: Currently going ahead using interim LiCCo budget figures (until LiCCo budget signed off by JTS). Plan will be printed and distributed with Annual Review.

b. Partner progress against Management Plan - Updates from Partners

Natural England Conservation Advice Package Update: new CA package for the Exe has now gone through consultation phase and is due to be published in September. Questions should be directed to Tom Manning (via SC if necessary). SC advised that TM is going to be seconded to the MMO, his position at NE will be advertised.

Erosion of Bull Hill: The Bull Hill mussel bed has recently suffered a significant loss of mussel due to a lack of spat settlement in recent years and the old mussel dying off. As well as this being a concern for food availability for the estuarine birds, the loss of mussel may reduce the stability of the bank and lead to erosion. NE are working with the Exmouth Mussel Company to trial an experimental seed recovery technique involving the use of hairy rope, anchored to the bed, to capture seed mussel relayed from outside the estuary. If this seed holds it will provide a stable substrate for more mussel spat to settle on. If the trial as a success it can be expanded to cover a larger area over Bull Hill.

River Basin Management Plan: Consultation is now complete and a draft document is being produced, with the final document due this winter. Questions should be directed to Hugh Davey (via SC if necessary).

MW (DTC): Rail Resilience exhibition currently displaying in Dawlish. Starcross & Cockwood flood defence scheme review is underway.

GB (RSPB): "Big Sleep Out" at Bowling Green Marsh 8-9th August to observe nocturnal species. Also currently busy with groups visits (schools, Brownies, Guides etc.) and running classes such as bird watching, nature writing, and photography.

PC (DCC): DCC has applied to a number of awards for the Exe Trail, and has been shortlisted for the RTPi regional awards. Engineers have been nominated for Institute of Chartered Engineers awards.

7. Approval of Annual Review 2014-15

Approved

8. Approval of EEMP Mission Statement

GB & PC had suggestions for improving the wording of the statement.

ACTION: GB & PC to send re-worded to statement to SC, for circulation and approval via email.

9. Any other Business

Bicycles at Starcross: Bikes need to cross bridge over railway to access ferry, but bridge crossing is not easy with a bike. SC has contacted council who accept need to address this, but approval for a cycle ramp. BH suggested this matter be referred to Lewis Ward (DCC Planning & Transport).

10. Date of next Management Group Meeting

2pm Wednesday 16th September 2015 – Committee Suite, County Hall.

ACTION: SC to suggest in early February for next Forum meeting.

ACTION: BH to enquire if DCC staff car park could be made available for next MG meeting.