



EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

MANAGEMENT GROUP MINUTES

Sargent Room, Coaver Club, County Hall, Exeter

2pm Friday 30 May 2014

Present:

Cllr Bernard Hughes, DCC (BH) (Chair)
Cllr Pat Graham, ETC (PG);
Cllr Margaret Baldwin, ECC (MB);

Aidan Winder, DCC (AW);
Cllr Andrew Cadbury, SPC (AC)
Midge Kelly, Exe Estuary Officer (MK)

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence:

Apologies were noted from: Tom Manning, NE (TM); Jane Lavick, LiCCo/EA; Graeme Smith, TDC; Neil Downes, Forum Chair; Lynn Trout, Forum Vice Chair; Pete Ball, EA; Cllr Ted Hockin, TDC; Cllr Tim Pattison, WPC.

2. Budget Update

AW introduced the budget monitoring statement showing the financial position at the end of March 2014. He pointed out that the LiCCo project and its associated funding has been of major benefit for the Partnership, but that the project is currently scheduled to end on 30th September. AW is actively pursuing an extension of the project until the end of February 2015, along with the National Trust and at least one French partner. Although this will not bring any more funding, it will give us more time to deliver existing and additional outputs using the funding that has already been allocated to us.

Savings have been made against budget on several items, including design of the Exe Activities leaflet, printing of Exe Press newsletters and Estuary Trail interpretation. An amount of £19721 was carried forward into 2014/15.

3. Update on Staffing Issues - AW

AW has been actively pursuing several options for maintaining momentum in the work of the Partnership in the light of MK's planned departure on 13th June. Paula (Salge) has done some great work on recreation, moorings, State of the Exe and the database, and she is still working with us to complete these pieces of work. Paula has a good grasp of Exe Estuary matters, and is also familiar with the 'wonders' of the Exe Estuary Partnership's filing system (the evolutionary product of 20 Partnership years and 7 Estuary Officers).

AW has advertised through an internship scheme coordinated by Exeter University for a graduate to focus primarily on the LiCCo deliverables that must be completed by the end of the project. He is interviewing on 5th June, along with MK and Sam Creed (LiCCo Project Manager at the Environment Agency). The internship would be for a term of about 4 months.

If the LiCCo project is extended, we have an extended timeframe for delivering LiCCo outputs. If, however, there is no extension, we may need to ask Paula if she would be able to step in to help out on a temporary basis.

At the Partnership's Working Group meeting on 21st May, Partners expressed doubts that the internship candidates would be sufficiently experienced to undertake the Estuary Officer role, and recommended that Management Group be asked to agree to an appropriately employed and graded officer being appointed as currently. In view of the restrictions on recruitment within DCC because of financial constraints, AW explained that if Management Group partners agreed in principle, the post would only be advertised as being for one year initially, though the term could be extended if funding were to be found.

BH pointed out that a one year term may discourage applicants from outside the area, because of relocation costs.

PG said that the range of experiences offered through the position would be very attractive.

BH said that it is important to minimise the time between officers so as to maintain the level of momentum expected of the Partnership by the local community.

AGREED: Partners agreed unanimously to support the advertising at national level and recruitment of a full-time Exe Estuary Officer for a period of 1 year, on the same grade as currently.

ACTION: AW to pursue 1-year appointment of Exe Estuary Officer at current grade with DCC, with post to be advertised nationally

BH asked whether any Management Group members would be involved in the recruitment process. AW said he would be happy to discuss this at a future time.

ACTION: AW to discuss involving Management Group members in the recruitment of the next Exe Estuary Officer.

4. Exe Estuary Officer report – MK

MK elaborated on the list of activities and achievements circulated in advance of the meeting. There were no queries.

5. LiCCo Update - MK

MK explained that JL has been focussing most of her time on launching the educational resources to teachers. The first training session took place on 22nd May. It went really well and the resources were very well received by the 50 primary school teachers who attended. With another 50 primary and further 35 secondary level teachers signed up to receive the training and the resources, awareness of climate change and other issues relating to the Exe Estuary will receive a significant boost through the project.

6. Update on Paula's work – MK

State of the Exe – PS and MK are in discussion with the design and print company. Proof 1 has been received but not yet checked. MK circulated a printed copy for information.

Recreation Review – PS emailed draft version of the first half of the report to MK today (MK circulated a printed copy for information). Remainder has been drafted but PS wants to add to this before releasing.

Moorings review – Work almost completed despite issue with obtaining information from some sources. NL has been very helpful in this regard.

Database review – PS has undertaken review of old Access database, bringing in records from Exe Press mailings and clean up databases. MK was informed today that database is back in

Access format, after PS has been working with it in Excel format. PS has drafted report setting out the steps that she has taken to date to review the database, as required for the LiCCo project.

7. Bird Viewing Screen – MK

MK tabled notes of a site meeting that took place on 25th May with officers from EDDC's Countryside Team, Geoff Morris of Exmouth Tenants and Residents' Association, and Rupert Ormerod, local WEBS counter.

PG reported that she has walked the footpath leading to the proposed site for the viewing screen to assess it for wheelchair accessibility. Though accessible from the lorry park to the site of the former (no longer present) bird hide, the stretch of path north of the old hide to the point at which the footpath turns to the right will require some attention (filling of dips, etc.). North of the point where the main path turns right, the path will require widening and resurfacing as far as the proposed screen location.

EDDC own the land on which the proposed viewing screen is to be located. Steve Edmonds (SE), Nature Conservation Officer at EDDC has agreed to construct the screen in-house, which he thinks would be the most cost-effective option. The work would need to be completed before September to avoid disturbing the birds. The screen could be constructed ahead of the path being upgraded. SE would prefer to out-source the path upgrade.

BH offered to finance the upgrading of the path from his locality budget if SE would provide a quote (or three).

ACTION: SE to obtain quotes for upgrading the path north of the former bird hide to the proposed site of the viewing screen and make contact with BH to discuss as soon as possible.

ACTION: In view of the need to complete the screen before September, SE to provide an indicative cost for screen construction to AW.

ACTION: AW to liaise with BH re costing of the screen and give approval to SE to proceed with the work if appropriate.

8. Action Log from March meetings of Working and Management Groups

There was no discussion on this item.

9. Any Other Business

MK circulated an information note from Natural England concerning arrangements for ensuring greater consistency in the way that Marine Protected Areas (such as the Exe Estuary) are managed in future. A stakeholder groups is being set up and will meet in the next few months to look at aspects such as whether there is an action plan for each site, and whether the management partners are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the site.

ACTION: ALL to note the information note.

ACTION: MK to circulate information note with minutes

10. Date of next meetings:

The next Working Group meeting will be at 2pm on **Thursday 11th September** in the Sargent Room of Coaver Club

The next Management Group meeting will be at 2pm on **Friday 26th September** in the Sargent Room of Coaver Club

After the meeting, BH thanked MK for her work as Exe Estuary Officer for the last 2.5 years, and on behalf of the Management Group, very kindly presented her with a gorgeous print of a painting looking across the Exe Estuary towards Topsham Lock from St Margaret's Church. MK was very touched and thanked Partners. She wished the Partnership all the best for the future and promised to keep in touch – and to come along to the next Forum event (though **not** to give a presentation or ask difficult questions as was suggested!).

