

Exe Estuary Management Partnership

Partnership Committee

Agenda



Date / time: Tuesday 20th September 2018, 10:00am

Location: Starcross Yacht Club, EX6 8JJ

Voting Members

Devon County Council (Partnership Chair)	Councillor Jeffrey Trail BEM (JT)
Teignbridge District Council (Partnership Vice Chair)	Cllr Edward Hockin (EH)
East Devon District Council	Cllr Michael Howe (MH)
Exmouth Town Council	Cllr Bruce De Saram (BDS)
Starcross Parish Council	Cllr Andrew Cadbury (AC)
Bishops Clyst Parish Council	Cllr Christopher Scanes (CS)
Forum Chair	Lynn Trout (LT)
Forum Vice Chair	Jeremy Rawlings (JR)
RSPB	Gavin Bloomfield (GB)
RYA	Alan Wood (AW)
Powderham Estate	Lord Charles Courtenay (CC)
British Canoeing	Jane Evans (JE)
Natural England	Andrew Stanger (AS)

Supporting Officers (Non-Voting)

Devon County Council	Peter Chamberlain (PC)
Teignbridge District Council	Graeme Smith (GS)
Exe Estuary Officer	Stephanie Clark (SC)
Minute Taker	Rowena Game (RG)
Devon County Council	Kirsten Pritchard (KP)

Specialist Advisors (Non-Voting)

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP) / Teignbridge District Council	Cllr Humphrey Clemens (HC)
Starcross Parish Council	Cllr Megan Debenham (MD)
South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP)	Neil Harris (NH)
Exeter City Council	David Bartram (DB)
Powderham Estate	Miles Webber (MW)

Apologies

Stakeholder Representative	Rex Frost (RF)
Environment Agency	Hugh Davey (HD)
Devon & Severn IFCA	Katherine Stephenson (KS)
East Devon District Council	James Chubb (JC)
Exeter City Council	Colin Acton (CA)
Lympstone Fishery and Harbour Association	Neil Downes (ND)
British Canoeing	Peter Thorn (PT)
Exeter City Council	Cllr Andrew Leadbetter (AL)
Dawlish Town Council	Cllr Terry Lowther (TL)
Dawlish Town Council	Cllr Martin Wrigley (MW)
Woodbury Parish Council	Cllr Graham Murrin (GM)

1. Apologies for absence and introductions – Cllr Jeffrey Trail

- Apologies: As above.
- Thank you to Jeremy for chairing the Stakeholder Forum, which was very successful.
- Thank you to Starcross Yacht Club for allowing us to use their venue for this meeting.
- Voting positions of the new Partnership Committee was clarified, as detailed above.

2. Introduction to role of new Partnership Committee – Peter Chamberlain

- This was the first meeting of the new Partnership Committee, replacing the previous Management Group, based on the revised structure. The committee will act as a strategic lead, with input from all signatories of MoA.
- The rationalisation of the Officer Working Group and Management Group was put in place to make a more efficient model. The Partnership Committee is the overriding committee with a strong strategic overview.
- We hope to see benefits over time.

3. Minutes and Action Log of previous meeting – Cllr Jeffrey Trail

- Minutes agreed an accurate record.
 - o Question raised by GS regarding Any Other Business at last meeting where John Goss-Custard was asked to speak at a future meeting. Referral to the presentation given by Myles Blood-Smyth at a past meeting which was useful to the group.
 - o PC suggested that this would need to tie into an appropriately focussed agenda and would be better if the slot was cohesive with the main agenda topics.
 - o AW mentioned that he would like this point to be raised in the future, if it is not brought to next meeting.
 - o NH Suggested that Footprint Ecology also be extended an invite as an alternative view.
 - o Partnership Committee indicated that they were keen for this at a relevant point in the future and should be a balanced approach.
 - o Suggestion to have this as an information session prior to main meeting, although most representatives are likely to attend this anyway.
 - o Suggestion to look into linking this to the topic of ongoing monitoring.
 - o Suggestion to perhaps circulate all past papers relating to this.
 - o **ACTION:** SC to look into integrating theme into next Partnership Committee to include talks from both John Goss-Custard and Footprint Ecology, potentially linking to ongoing monitoring on the Exe.
- Action Log
 - o All funding and statutory partners to sign adopted MoA and return before Easter –
Ongoing
 - o Feedback on suggestions for funding opportunities to further Exe local fisheries work –
Ongoing

4. Approval of Annual Review 2017-18 – Peter Chamberlain

- Formal adoption to be confirmed at this meeting.
- Suggested new format – to make the document more user friendly, it is proposed that in future any updates on specific actions will be confined to the existing table in the Annual Delivery Plan and the Annual Review will become a concise summary document, highlighting key achievements and projects.
- Vote:
 - o Proposer: Cllr Edward Hockin
 - o Seconder: Lynn Trout
 - o Unanimous vote for adoption.

5. Delivery Plan Highlight Report – Stephanie Clark

Note: Only some items within the report were discussed due to many items being covered later in the agenda. Those highlighted as amber were discussed. There were no red items that required immediate attention from the committee.

- PO4.2: Identify new funding streams – although this year’s budget is secure, we need to continue to identify new funding streams to ensure a continued budget for 2019-20.
- PO8.1: Promoting/Representing the Partnership (attending events).
 - o JT – Exmouth Mussel Festival – September (Organised by Exmouth Town Council with input/attendance from EEMP).
- PO8.2: Produce Exe Press Newsletters – No identified funding for this year. Work with partners to cover costs.
 - o Executive suggested exploring small scale advertising
- WMR1.1: Deliver two Clean-Up Events.
 - o Autumn event booked up in one day.
 - o Attended by 131 volunteers.
 - o Removed broken crab pots.
 - o Tractor got stuck in mud- see agenda item 6.
- DB asked how plastics from the Clean-Up are disposed of.
 - o Plastics are taken away by East Devon District Council Street Scene to be recycled.
 - o DB suggested use of Exeter City recycling facilities in future.
 - o **ACTION:** DB to send SC details of plastics disposal for consideration at future Clean-Ups.
- WHD4.2: Codes of Conduct work completed – positive feedback has been received.
- E11.4: Education sessions delivered with East Devon District Council. Charged £100 this year, was well received by schools.

6. Statement re tractor incident at Autumn Clean Up – Summary – Stephanie Clark, Exe Estuary Officer

- Autumn Clean-Up Event – 8th September 2018.

- The use of a tractor is essential for running of Clean-Up and is routinely used to remove large and heavy objects from the foreshore.
- The tractor and driver were kindly volunteered by the RSPB.
- A number of safety procedures are in place, including a risk assessment, safety briefings for both volunteers and the tractor driver, map of areas to avoid and contingency plans.
- The tractor got stuck in an area of soft mud and despite best efforts could not be recovered on the day of the event.
- The necessary authorities were informed, including Coastguard, Harbour Authority, Police and Environment Agency.
- The pollution threat was monitored as the tide returned and assessed by a Tier 2 response service on 9th September prior to attempted recovery, but the sealed system of the tractor meant only a small and minutely thin layer of oil escaped. This was relayed to the Environment Agency, who confirmed that they were not concerned about this level of pollution and the decision was made by the Harbour Authority not to deploy a boom.
- The tractor was successfully retrieved on 10th September.
- Reviews of the incident by RSPB and DCC (as host authority) underway. EEMP will need to decide on future approach, taking into account the reviews undertaken by DCC and the RSPB, recommended that Executive be delegated to consider this.

Discussion

- JT stated that it was an unfortunate incident and we would not like to see the tractor driver penalised. At this moment we will wait for the Executive to discuss and the two reviews to be produced.
- A query was raised regarding financial implications involved. GB confirmed that the financial implications fell with the RSPB, costs hope to be covered by insurance, unknown at this moment in time.
- LT raised issue of changes to the estuary bed. The bed has changed quite dramatically recently and will continue to change due to the new flood wall. Don't underestimate these changes. LT asked that the Harbour Authority look at how the bed is changing and navigation implications and identify impacts to all users.
- Question raised as to whether partnership should be putting out publicity regarding changes to the river and safety.
- MH raised the issue of lack of press releases during the weekend of the tractor incident. A statement should have been released to state the facts, there is a need to be more careful and efficient with PR.
- GB stated that RSPB did release a statement, not immediately.
- MH clarified that partners should have been notified of any releases so that they could relay this information further.

7. Feedback from Stakeholder Forum 2018 – Jeremy Rawlings, Forum Vice Chair

- The Forum was designed as an opportunity for two-way communication, in response to feedback from stakeholders that there wasn't enough opportunity for locals to feed into the work of the Partnership. Hopefully we have started the process of making communication more open through the implementation of this new Forum.
- The evening was divided up into three sessions:
 - o Introduction and Review of Governance.
 - o Presentations
 - Role and Work of EEMP.
 - Role and Work of SEDHRP – Clarity was made regarding the difference between both partnerships. Feel this needs to be continued at future events to ensure that the perceptions don't become muddled again.
 - Snapshot Updates – Exeter City Council role as Harbour Authority, Queen's Drive Development, Exmouth Tidal Defence Scheme. It was made very clear during the event that we need these authorities to come and present at the Winter Forum. In particular, representation is needed from the Harbour Authority.
 - o Feedback Session
 - Feedback sessions were positive, and users seemed to engage well with them. Feedback on the promotion of the codes of conduct was positive and seemed to work well, people seemed to enjoy coming up with ideas and starting conversations.
- Sectoral representation – would like to see even more recreational representation in future, need to engage more with recreational users.
- 14 completed feedback forms – positive overall.

- JT raised SWW issues at The Colony. Inlet valve is broken, causing flooding to The Colony, Exmouth. This has been an existing issue for over 10 years. SWW have requested that they engage with local resident. Hoping to resolve issue within next 2 years.

- JE raised further SWW issue regarding the sewage works, which kick out a large deposit. Air freshener sprayed out to mitigate smell. Questioned whether group could encourage better cleaning processes.
ACTION: JT to raise issue of cleaning processes at sewage works with SWWater.

8. Updates & clarification of roles of partnerships and Harbour Authority

1. Summary of respective roles – Peter Chamberlain

- There is an established need to set out clear roles between EEMP, SEDHRP and ECC as the Harbour Authority.
- As suggested by GS at a previous partnership meeting, it has been agreed that we document the difference in roles. A document has been drafted and was presented to the Partnership Committee for comment.

- An appendix has been used to clarify all three roles whilst the main documents summarises the differences between each partnership/authority.

ACTION: Feedback on management roles document to be sent to SC by Thursday 27th September.

- The document will be discussed with SEDHRP and ECC once feedback has been received.
- JE: Raised that SEDHREC (South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee) is missing as a fourth body.
- PC clarified that it is not a separate body. The term partnership refers to the relevant grouping of bodies that are working together through its Executive committee and an informal Working Group. The Executive Committee, which is referenced in the document, operates as a joint committee of the three local authorities with their elected member representatives empowered to make decisions relating to the implementation of its Mitigation Strategy; as with other local authority committees, there is a right for public attendance at these meetings. The most appropriate wording for this will be checked with the Habitats Regulations Delivery Manager.
- Question raised regarding the audience for this document?
- PC clarified that the document has not been produced with a specific audience in mind; whilst set out in a technical manner, it will be available on the EEMP website. This forms just one element of our attempt to promote a better understanding of the different bodies and their respective roles.
- GB: Definition of Harbour Authority function in document is too limited. As a public authority, they have a role in habitat regulations compliance.
- PC: This document is still in draft format and we have yet to fully discuss the roles set out with the relevant partnership/authority.
- DB questioned the need to include the full role of the Harbour Authority as this is extensive and may confuse things further.

ACTION: SC to work with ECC to ensure role is detailed adequately within management roles document.

- GS stated that he was happy with the document being produced, however more clarity is needed in regard to the EEMPs non-statutory role in comparison to ECCs and SEDHRPs statutory roles.

2. South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership and current work – Cllr Humphrey Clemens

- Legally constituted – ECC, EDDC and TDC. Set up to mitigate impacts on designated sites with regard to new residential development of 30,000 homes around the Exe.
- The work of the partnership will be monitored over time.
- The partnership works in conjunction with the EEMP where appropriate, for example on the wildlife refuges and the codes of conduct.

- The patrol boat and yellow marker buoys are in place. The larger buoys have the date of operation on them.
- Review of signage – complete.
- Codes of conduct – complete.
- Dawlish Country Park- very successful. Trees planted, orchards planted, curlew bunting habitat in place. Curlew buntings have increased from 3 breeding pairs to 10 since the opening of the park. Over 200 people per day visiting.
- All work is developer funded, using the roof tax collected since 2011 (£600-£800).
- West Exe SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) to be put in place in future.
- Following public concerns raised in response to earlier proposals relating to the parking arrangements and charges at Dawlish Warren, linked to the SEDHRP Mitigation Strategy, consideration is now being given to three new options:
 - o Dog ban on warren.
 - o Car parking changes.
 - o Lift ban from Red Rock, to enable a new dog walking circuit.
- LT asked if there would be a SANGS on the East Side of the Exe?
- Answer given as yes.
- JE asked if there was legislation indicating that commercial impacts can stop mitigations proposals.
- PC clarified that the legislation is the mitigation of effects of residential development. The commercial interest was taken into account to satisfy interests of constituents as in most cases.

3. Exe Estuary Management Partnership and current work – Stephanie Clark

- The EEMP takes a balanced approach to management of the Exe, to ensure human activities can continue into the future safely, with respect to other users and with minimal impact to the environment.
- EEMP mission statement was read to committee.
- Current work includes:
 - o Codes of conduct – promoting safe and responsible use of the Exe.
 - o Exe Signage Review – inventory of signage, rationalisation of signage, update of signage (new SEDHRP signage, updated EDDC signage, updated Exe Estuary Trail signage and new EEMP signage).
 - o Exe leaflets – Activities, Explorer, Wildlife and Heritage. Funded by Parishes Together.
- Point was raised regarding Parishes Together funding becoming Community Funding.

ACTION: GS to look at funding opportunities on west side of estuary, similar to Communities Together Fund.

- LT raised concerns over lack of mention of commercial interests in mission statement, asks EEMP to add to mission statement.
- SC clarified that it is mentioned under the economic umbrella, however will aim to clarify this.

ACTION: SC to make it clear that commercial interest on the Exe is recognised by the Partnership.

ACTION: SC to circulate ppt that wasn't able to use at this meeting.

4. Exeter City Council / Harbour Authority and current work – David Bartram

- Despite 20% budget cuts, approval of Harbour Master and two Patrol Officers. Funding to be found in budget.
 - o Includes new patrol boat, ideally want an all year-round patrol boat.
- Harbour Master will be integrated into Waterways Team at Exeter City Council and will report to Steve Carnell as service manager for that area.
- The three posts are currently in the job evaluation process.
- The aim is to have somebody in place by the end of the calendar year, this is however dependant on whether suitable candidates apply.
- Currently looking at options for an office – would like Harbour Master to be estuary based.
- DB role is to look at commercialising river and canal.
- JT: Exmouth Town Council has set aside some funds to help with fuel, would like to see patrolling of whole estuary.
- Question raised: Will the job specification be relayed so we know what we can ask of Harbour Master and patrollers?
- Yes that is something we can do.

ACTION: DB to circulate information on roles and responsibilities of the Harbour Master and patrollers to Partnership Committee.

- CC asked if ECC are looking at how navigability of estuary could be improved.
- DB confirmed they are looking at this.
- JR asked if there is someone advising on recruitment?
- DB confirmed they do have others advising, including David Vaughan of the Teignmouth Harbour Commission.
- LT asked if there was an organisation in place to support this?
- DB clarified there are various organisations.
- GS confirmed there was a national grouping of Harbour Authorities, which is currently chaired by David Vaughan, so he will be able to convey their insight and support in this process.

- CC asked if there was opportunity to combine this patrol boat with that of the SEDHRP.
- JT confirmed that they have two separate roles.
- Comment raised regarding abuse of speed limit and how it is a frequent issue.
- DB confirmed that once in post they will be informing in first instance and enforcing as necessary.

9. Innovations from Powderham Estate – Miles Webber

Historically covered Dawlish Warren to Topsham.

Previous work:

- Powderham Belvedere, new roof and walls stabilised. Detailed survey of building was undertaken to make sure the work was historically correct. Work was undertaken in consultation with Historic England and Natural England.

Ongoing work:

- Painters slipway – Powderham have fought to keep the slipway in place. It had fallen into disuse. A flood gate has been installed by the EA, as part of flood defence works on wider Exe. The works are ongoing. The slipway is 3.5-4m in height and 4.5m in width. Could be extended further if Network Rail do any more work.
- The slipway is situated away from the nature reserve and goes out onto high tide. The current works are due to be completed at the end of September.
- 300 tonnes of sediment have been excavated from the slipway and taken away. There is currently a metre of mud at bottom of slipway and discussions regrading removal of this mud are ongoing with the EA.
- Next to Teignbridge car park at Starcross.
- Work with DCC regarding the estuary road. Local users are unhappy. DCC is in consultation with Powderham and local users to improve the road and finish the Exe Estuary Trail scheme. Talks of a possible Highways Order to restrict traffic movement at certain times of the year, another option being staggered gates, or a single-track system with passing places, or a one-way system.
- Powderham are looking to improve their carpark as well as including a shop and café.
- Plans for the car park to be stones. Two-way entrance and exit, to highways standard for lorries. Powderham Country Stores, restaurant, farm shop, garden centre. Hoping to benefit castle and country stores with new infrastructure. Planning application is due for decision this month. Have accessed grant through Support for Rural Infrastructure Development for England. Hoping to complete works by March 2019.

Future work:

- Further work on Exe Estuary Trail to improve accessibility for cyclists.

Discussion

- MD raised question regarding the flood gates being closed.
- MW confirmed that initially the EA wanted to block up the slipway with bund of clay to avoid the issue of the flood gate. It has been agreed that the default position will be shut, with safe exit for pedestrians via some steps down the side. Currently looking at signage and how to warn of risks. Gates will be locked.
- MD: Public access for vehicles/boats?
- MW confirmed there will be no public access for vehicles or boats.
- CC: In interest of the Estate to provide access, we are hoping to have future discussions regarding a gate keeper.
- MD asked if the petition signed by local people favoured access for boats.
- MW confirmed that it did favour access for boats, however due to the mud at the bottom of the slipway, the gate needs to stay shut for safety, at least at this point in time.
- MD stated that a group of volunteers will be used to manage access at General's Lane slipway and suggested the same might be done for Painters.
- CC said can take this discussion further with SPC.
- GS asked if telemetry will be used on the gates.
- MW confirmed it will be, but the EA would still prefer that they remain shut.
- AC raised an issue with the parking by the church on the Estuary road and asked if Powderham could open up a nearby field for use as parking.
- CC confirmed there were ongoing discussions with TDC regarding parking and will promote parking at Powderham Castle.

10. Any other business

- AS stated that Miles Blood-Smith was soon to be undertaking a small trial of seed mussel on Bull Hill. This is a trial to see the feasibility of the replenishment of stocks on the Exe and is not for harvesting.
- Exmouth Town Hall Committee Rooms were suggested for next Partnership Committee meeting – TBC with MH.

Meeting End

Other Information

Date of next Partnership Committee meeting:

- Thursday 14th March 2019, 10am-12pm – Exmouth Town Hall

Date of next Stakeholder Forum:

- Tuesday 5th February 2019, 6.30pm-9.30pm – Council Chamber, County Hall