The Wissey WFD Pilot Catchment Project

Holding Group meeting, Ecotech Centre Ltd, Swaffham, Tuesday 27th March 2012,

**Meeting Notes - draft**

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| **Present** | |
| **Organisation** | **Name** |
| Angling Trust | Kelvin Allen |
| Anglian Water (Source Protection Manager) | Simon Eyre (joint chair) |
| Anglian Water (Catchment Pilot Project Officer) | Fiona Wood (joint chair) |
| Anglian Water (Stoke Ferry Source Manager) | David Steele |
| Anglian Water (Environmental Standards) | Emily Payne |
| Catchment Sensitive Farming | Lisa Chenery |
| Environment Agency (Area Water Framework Directive Co-ordinator) | Helen Hunter |
| Environment Agency (Area Catchment Delivery Manager) | Richard Bowen |
| Environment Agency (Groundwater and Contaminated Land team leader) | Chris Tate |
| National Farmers Union | Michael Payne |
| National Farmers Union | Alex Dinsdale |
| Natural England | Nigel Simpson CSF (for Alex Nichols) |
| Norfolk Rivers Trust | David Diggens (for Mark Watson) |
| Norfolk Wildlife Trust | Nick Carter |
| RSPB | Simon Tonkin |
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| **Apologies** |  |
| Country Land and Business Association | Rob Wise |

**Table 1. Information**

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| **Item** | **Information** |
| **Introductions** | Round table introductions were combined with a map exercise for attendees to describe their geographic area of responsibility.  **Different stakeholders operate over different regions:**   1. National, but local contacts: NFU (Michael Payne) 2. 7 counties [Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Herts, Bedfordshire, Northants, Lincolnshire]: RSPB, Anglian Water (only very approximately to county boundaries; sewage: minus Herts, plus Rutland; drinking water: minus Herts, Cambridgeshire and Essex). 3. 6 counties: [Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire] NFU (Alex Dinsdale), Angling Trust, Natural England 4. Cambridgeshire and adjoining segments of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Bedfordshire, Environment Agency central area of Anglian region (the Great Ouse River Basin) 5. County: Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk Rivers Trust 6. ‘Little Ouse’ priority catchment: Catchment Sensitive Farming |
| **Introducing the Wissey Pilot Catchment** | **Aim of the pilot:**  Develop the process of collaborative working  Produce a collaborative management plan for the Wissey  **Timetable for the pilot:**  Jan 2012 – Summary information for each pilot  March 2012 – Identify current activity and issues, set up stakeholder group  June 2012 – ‘Catchment appraisal’: brief description, and shared understanding of, the problems in the catchment, to inform the ‘plan’.  Sep 2012 - Draft plan for the catchment (key services provided by the catchment, relative value, problems, vision, actions committed to by partners, outline costs.  Dec 2012 – Final plan.  **Is there any additional money earmarked for actions?** There was discussion of whether there was any additional funding earmarked for actions identified in the plan. The idea behind the collaboration is largely to get much more out of what is going on already, by better targeting and linking of existing pots of money and resources. However, related projects are looking at novel funding sources. [Ed: If the ‘ecosystem services’ concept progresses further, this would also be a mechanism for drawing in funds, from a variety of sources].  **Will the output of this holding group be fed into statutory plans such as the River Basin Management Plans?** (i.e. is there any point to the exercise?). Although the exact mechanism for feeding the output upward into larger plans is yet to be worked out, the point of the catchment holding groups is to generate realistic and enthusiastic actions from the ground upwards. [Ed: we can of course deliver actions on the ground ahead of the ‘plan’ feeding up into larger plans]. |
| **Collaboration** | **DAD** [Decide – Announce – Defend] vs **EDD** [Engage – Deliberate – Decide]  **Phrases** we associated with collaboration were: working together, shared objectives, partnership, compromise, good communications, trust, building on strengths, balance, pooling resources, and avoiding duplication.  **One definition** of collaborative working is: “people from different departments or organisations working together to achieve something…   * 1. which they cant achieve alone, or   2. if collaborating will add value, or   3. if collaborating will save time/cost”   We thought that **advantages** to us of collaboration might include:   * value for money * networking and having a powerful voice meaning that the chance of success is increased * having a broad buy-in / acceptance of your activities * durability of initiatives – an agreed approach is likely to last longer * that initiatives would be self-regulating * that outcomes were of a higher quality * that all available information would be gathered and used * following on from this, that actions would meet a real need on the ground as opposed to perceived priority.   We thought that possible **disadvantages** to us might be:   * having to compromise! * the process is more complex, and therefore slow * allied to the last – the process is also time consuming * outcomes might be a fudge, and not really please anyone/tackle any problem? * Stakeholders need to believe in the process to stay with it through any low points   Types of collaboration might range through:   1. coordinating activities so as not to duplicate each other 2. joint branding 3. joint projects 4. joint delivery of core services on the ground (i.e. some pooling of management and resources) 5. full strategic collaboration (e.g. joined up public sector activities)   Some existing collaborations were described  Some aspects of collaboration that might be different to previous working:   * + Objectives must be agreed very clearly   + There will be no standard process by which things happen   + Stakeholders will need to accommodate:   + different ways of working   + different levels of resource   + different timescales |
| **Interests** | These were recorded in a flip-chart exercise**. See Table 2. below.**  There was discussion around whether there really was any **conflict of priorities** over environmental protection vs economic activity. Points made:   * Farming in the long term depends upon a healthy soil (nutrient cycling etc) and ecosystem (pollination, pest control etc) so in many circumstances we should not talk in terms of a choice having to be made between economic activity or environmental protection. In farming, precision farming and better targeted crop protection measures have been used more and more over the last decade, and there is scope for further use of integrated crop management. * However, although it is largely a win-win situation to reduce leaching losses to water, sometimes it is economic to apply N at a rate that will generate elevated losses to water [Ed: and in other activities such as building developments, the economic drivers to reduce waste or pollution may be even weaker]   **Metaldehyde** This is the active ingredient in slug pellets, [Ed: used particularly in the autumn on Winter Wheat and Oil Seed Rape]. It is also used in army ration pack stoves, at least up to 4 years ago. It is not known what contribution these stoves make to Metaldehyde transfers into catchment waters. It is possible that farmyard spills are a significant source of Metaldehyde in surface water. A metaldehyde ban would be likely to lead to more variable crop yields. There are alternative products, although these are more expensive, and actually have a greater environmental impact than metaldehyde. Take-up of Integrated Pest Management techniques could also be expanded. [Ed: The statutory drinking water standard is set as 0.1ug/l for each individual pesticide]  **Environmental Stewardship** – the MAGIC website shows which land is in or out of the various Natural England environmental schemes. The 6 counties coverage of ELS is very close to the national average of 70%. Higher Level Stewardship hasn’t in the past made full use of its resources protection potential. [Ed: There are however HLS options to revert arable land or intensive grassland to low or no input grassland, for seasonal removal of livestock from high risk land, and watercourse fencing. These are on top of ELS options such as buffer strips, specific maize management, in-field grass areas, cover crops, and maintenance of watercourse fences.]  **NFU membership** approximately 50-70% nationally and considered representative locally |
| **Activities** | These were recorded in a flip chart exercise with reference to a wall map of the WFD waterbody condition map of the Wissey. **See Table 3. below** |
| **Group Aims** | An initial discussion generated the following points:   * Water quantity and water quality are related * WFD not only requires good ecological status for a water body, but no deterioration in its WFD classification, including drinking water quality where applicable (article 7) * RSPB: *Cleaner water with good ecological status which delivers a range of environmental, wildlife and societal outcomes* * NFU: *Working together to deliver cleaner water for all through improved management of the Wissey catchment* * CSF: *Improving water management in the catchment*, plus bullet points.   Alex, Simon Tompkin and Lisa were then tasked with working on this. **See separate discussion document** for the latest developments. |
| **Stakeholders** | We quickly discussed additional stakeholders, various suggestions were made but we didn’t come to a firm conclusion. Local authority representation was supported so someone will be invited; see action point for registering any comments on this. Inviting an additional farmer member was raised by Anglian Water, but not fully discussed. A shortlist of potential invitees will be brought to the next meeting.  **Numbers**: [Ed: 12 has been mooted as a good number to have on a holding group. We are already larger than that, but if there are key omissions then we should consider filling them. By the time we had got to know each other, the 15 we had at the first meeting did feel practical, so maybe one or two others could be on the group, given that one or two people will always be unable to attend].  **Criteria**: A stakeholder on the holding group must be very interested, have the time and funding to attend most of the meetings, and should also fulfil one or more of the following:   * Have knowledge * Have influence * Be affected * Have the ability to deliver environmental objectives * Have resources |

**Table 2. Interests – in descending order of popularity**

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|  | **Issue** | **Aim** | **This is a primary Issue to these organisations** | **This is a secondary Issue to these organisations** |
| 1 | Flow | Sustainable abstraction for drinking water and irrigation  Sufficient flow for fish and other biodiversity.  Ameliorate variation in flow to allow pumping of water to wetland creation downstream of sugar beet factory | EA  Anglian Water  NFU  Angling Trust  Rivers Trust  Wildlife Trust  RSPB  Natural England  8 | CSF? |
| 2 | Habitats, biodiversity and landscape in its broadest sense | Maintain and improve Norfolk rivers.  Species of particular interest:   * Water vole * Otter * Marsh harrier * Bittern * Stone Curlew and others through multifunctional environmental management. | Natural England [Ed: government body that sets up Environmental Stewardship agreements with landowners, and oversees the management of SSSIs]  EA  Wildlife Trust  Rivers Trust  RSPB  6 | Anglian Water  NFU  Angling Trust |
| 2= | Fish   * WFD objective * Part of food chain * Recreational value | Protect and improve populations through creating an adequate aquatic environment:   * Improve water quality * Reduce fish kills (there were kills in 2005 and 2011) * Improve morphology * Remove barriers to passage * Improve flow | EA  Angling Trust  Rivers Trust  Wildlife Trust  RSPB  Natural England  6 | Anglian Water  NFU  CSF |
| 4 | The whole suite of:   * WFD objectives * WFD plus wider diffuse pollution issues such as faecal indicators. | Meet good ecological status (WFD)  Reduce diffuse pollution transfers to water. | EA [Ed: statutory body responsible for meeting objectives of WFD]  CSF [Ed: government programme to address failures under other legislation, due to diffuse pollution – wildlife sites, drinking water, fisheries, bathing water]  Wildlife Trust  Rivers Trust  RSPB  5 | Natural England  Anglian Water  NFU [Ed: crop production is currently the main paid output from land management, though other ecosystem services may form a bigger part of the potential product in future]  Angling Trust |
| 5= | Nitrogen:   * Nitrate in 2 groundwater sources (AW) * Nitrate in the groundwater body as a whole, and North Pickenham Safeguard Zone in particular (EA) | Reduce Nitrate to less than 42 mg/l or 45 mg/l (drinking water vs WFD standard) in the groundwater and reverse the upward trend`  Sensible solutions, catchment by catchment. | Anglian Water  Environment Agency  CSF  NFU (N is key to crop production)  4 |  |
| 5= | Metaldehyde in surface water, particularly in wet autumns. (Not part of WFD ecological status determination, but contributes to Article 7 failure for drinking water quality) | Reduce to below 0.1ug/l (Drinking Water standard)  Sensible solutions, catchment by catchment | Anglian Water  NFU (risk of losing a product)  CSF  RSPB (integrated pest management)  4 | EA |
| 5= | Phosphorus in surface water | Meet WFD good ecological criteria  Determine source apportionment to inform investment (consents for wastewater P concentrations are set by the EA) | EA  Anglian Water  CSF  NFU (risk of further bureaucracy)  4 |  |
| 5= | Amenity and educational access | Maintain and improve | Natural England  Wildlife Trust  RSPB  Angling Trust  4 | EA  Anglian Water (river care)  NFU  Rivers Trust |
| 9 | Historic sites | Protect | Natural England  1 | EA  Anglian Water  NFU  Angling Trust  Rivers Trust  Wildlife Trust  RSPB  CSF |

**Table 3. Activities**

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| **Organisation** | **Project/ area of work** | **Scope** |
| Anglian Water as part of a wider DEFRA/EA programme | Wissey pilot catchment project | Trialling a collaborative approach to water and river management |
| Anglian Water | Catchment modelling | Developing computer models of the transport of water, N and pesticides in the Wissey, for both surface and groundwater. |
| Anglian Water | P investigations | Finding out where Anglian Water wastewater treatment works are contributing to the failure of WFD P status, allowing them to invest accordingly. |
| Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership, funded by Anglian Water | Valuing Water project | Investigating behaviour change with respect to valuing water and community governance of water resources, and alternative funding mechanisms. |
| CSF | 1-to-1 visits | Resource protection advice tailored to individual farms |
| CSF | Capital Grant scheme | Capital investment on farms for resource protection. 4 or 5 capital grant applications per year |
| EA | Finding ‘misconnections’ | Find where sewage is piped to storm sewers rather than foul water sewers |
| EA | Abstraction reviews | Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) review of issued licenses |
| EA | Ongoing monitoring of water quality | Sampling points have been adjusted for drought |
| EA | Catchment walk-overs | To ‘ground truth’ the relevance of river classifications and proposed remediation measures. |
| EA | Review of acceptable flow | Developing an Environmental Flow Indicator (EFI) assessment to tailor the existing flow assesment to each catchment. Completion possibly by end of 2012 |
| NFU, CLA, chairing a collaboration with many other government, industry and wildlife bodies. | Campaign for the Farmed Environment | Encourage starting or renewal of ELS agreements, and improve the quality of options. Engagement, and Beacon Farms at Downham and Bradenham.. |
| NFU, CLA and other agricultural industry bodies | Promoting the recommendations of the Metaldehyde Stewardship Group (MSG) | The MSG was set up in 2009 by the manufacturer of metaldehyde slug pellets and the 6 main suppliers in the UK, to promote best practice and reduce the concentration of the active ingredient in the product |
| Natural England | HLS and ELS | Setting up Entry and Higher Level Stewardship agreements with landowners, and providing land management advice. |
| Natural England | SSSIs and European wildlife sites | Statutory body for protecting SSSIs etc |
| Norfolk Rivers Trust | Living North Sea | Recent work in the Babingley, Nar, and Stiffkey. Aspirations are to improve river habitats, and carry out monitoring afterwards. |
| Wildlife Trust | Mapping pingos | Habitat protection |
| Wildlife Trust | Wetland creation | Wetland creation between Hilgay and Wissington, to replace wetlands being lost to sea level rise. |
| Wildlife Trust | Living Landscapes  (see Glossary) | Projects in Wissey (Downham Market to Feltwell/Oxborough), and Brecks. Community and environmental focus |
| Wildlife Trust and RSPB | Internal Drainage Board biodiversity action plans |  |
| RSPB | Futurescape  (see Glossary) | Fenland Farmland Bird Recovery Project. In partnership with Natural England, 20,000 ha from over 80 farmers are going into Environmental Stewardship. The eastern boundary is just downstream of Stoke Ferry. |
| RSPB | Work with Hillsborough Estate | Stone Curlew and other habitat |
| RSPB | Demonstration Farms | Demonstrate good choice and management of ELS and HLA options. Nearest is nr Cambridge |
| RSPB | Farm advisors | Operate within project areas and in partnership with individual landowners |