**New Forest Catchment Pilot**

**Steering Group Meeting Notes**

**Date/Time:** Wednesday 30 May 2012 14:30

**Venue:** EA Office, Romsey

**Present:** Ian Barker – New Forest National Park Authority

Naomi Ewald – Pond Conservation Trust

Maxine Elliott – Environment Agency

Jim Whatley – New Forest National Park Authority (author)

**Apologies:** Nil

**Purpose:** Meeting to:

* Introduce newly appointed project officer
* Establish current status of project and plan way forward from this point

The following are the major points covered in the meeting:

* Appointment of project officer to coordinate stakeholder aspects of project was only made on 23 May 2012 due to internal HR interview processes. Stakeholder engagement tasks had slipped and it was important to tailor the project to the remaining time available. All agreed it was important to come up with something that was of good quality and would make a difference, rather than something to meet the timescale and ‘tick the boxes’.
* Agreed that the boundary of the project was the WFD New Forest catchment but where it was appropriate that remedial actions crossed this border this should form part of the final report
* Although this project finishes on 31/12/2012 it will set up a stakeholder group that agree collaborative action for the catchment and continue after the project’s end. This group will decide an agreed vision for the catchment. The project itself was about setting up this group and testing approaches to communicating with stakeholders and collaborative working. The project will have a steering group which relates to delivering the Defra pilot project.
* It was agreed that an agreed terminology was important to understanding the governance and that:
  + The **Project Steering Group** should comprise of NFNPA, Pond Conservation and EA to drive the project. This group would use the Huddle data sharing package.
  + The vision would be developed and agreed by a core group of key stakeholders which would grow as appropriate over time. These should include the future main players who are likely to be involved and will necessarily be a fluid group. At the present time this would be referred to as the **Catchment Development Group.** Members would not be required to sign up to a formal partnership during the project but it was anticipated that it would move into a formal partnership to deliver collaborative actions after the project. It was felt that members would be unwilling to commit to a formal partnership until they knew more about what was required. They would however be happy to help develop the vision and then possibly commit when they knew what they were getting into.
* A workshop for the **Catchment Development Group (CDG)** should be arranged for end June/early July. This would be to share information and ascertain their view of the problems and decide on priorities for the catchment. One to ones might also be required for members who could not attend on the day to obtain their views. The output should be an overview of the catchment as it is known by the group and bullet point priorities. The Huddle data sharing package should be utilised to allow CDG members to access information regarding the catchment. The funded facilitator should be involved at an early stage.
* There were two daylong WFD workshops for stakeholders in the New Forest catchment held by the EA over the last 4 years during. It is important to review the summaries that were produced as we will be undoubtedly be dealing with the same players. There was also an extensive spreadsheet produced identifying stakeholders and their contact details.

**Action**: Ian to contact existing group that met in February to introduce Jim as coordinator.

**Action**: Jim to organise workshop for late June/early July and conduct one to ones where possible and necessary

**Action**: Jim to meet with facilitator in the near future

**Action**: Maxine to locate and supply summaries and stakeholder details spreadsheet from previous EA WFD workshops

* Maxine has supplied Naomi with a review of the up to date WFD data and identified a number of area on which to focus. Naomi will place this on the Huddle software.

**Action**: Naomi to place EA WFD review data on Huddle

* The New Forest catchment differs from many others in that it comprises of many small rivers and streams which are discrete not connected, although they mostly have common features. It was felt that generally to get local stakeholder ownership of problems and actions, it was necessary to split further into sub-catchments as for example locals to Bartley Water were not interested in the Becton Bunny. It was agreed that in the project timescales it was better to develop actions for all these sub-catchments it was better to concentrate on possibly two although it might be necessary to address catchment-wide issues.
* After the CDG workshop it was agreed we should organise 2 or 3 sub-catchment workshops, ideally in august, which would need to be augmented by electronic contact and one to one meetings.
* This would be followed by site specific walkovers on the relevant catchments which were likely to be a small affair aimed at suggesting to landowners etc where it might be possible to make improvements by small changes. It was likely that the Land Advice Service could give help with this. These were different to the EA definition of walkovers which were to generally identify problems along specified river reaches.
* The EA are waiting for final approval for a £20k options appraisal WFD remedial project on the Becton Bunny, hopefully followed by undertaking the work in Years 2 & 3. It was agreed that this project could become involved in that to establish local stakeholder priorities. It was a 2k small catchment ideal to test ideas with actual funding to follow this up.

**Action**: Maxine to keep group informed of Becton Bunny project progress

* The final document of the project should be a shared vision for the catchment as in Page 9 of the Defra NFNPA/Pond Conservation bid document. It would identify priorities and was a forward look as to what needs to happen and the sort of measures that should be put in place. The 2 or 3 sub-catchment work would form examples of this.
* It was recognised that in the New Forest unlike many other catchments there was no particular group in existence already to take this forward and we were largely starting from scratch.
* It was identified that as workshops and walkovers were being held in the peak summer holiday period this would mean that potentially a number of stakeholders would not be available. This would therefore mean some reliance on one to ones and, although not ideal, electronic communication.
* The need for a small mid-project project initiation document was identified. Naomi had already completed some work on the project plan and had forwarded that to members today.

**Action**: Jim to take over project plan work and circulate consolidated plan to members