



Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum

Meeting Minutes

Thursday 3rd October 2024

Location: Warren Farm Barn, Headley Road, Mickleham, Dorking

RH5 6DG

14.00-16.00

<p>Present</p>	<p>Chair : Lisa Creaye-Griffin (SyNP)</p> <p>Zoe Channon, Andy Thwaite (City of London Corporation), Hendryk Jurk (GBC), Helen Cocker (SCC), Thomas Carmona (Reigate & Bansted). Alex Bagnall (MVDC), Rob Fairbanks (SHNL), Pete Leamore SHBC (online)</p> <p>Admin: Sophie Holt (SyNP)</p>	
<p>Apologies</p>	<p>Stewart Cocker, Lucy Shea</p>	
<p>Matters Arising</p>	<p>Minutes from the last meeting approved.</p> <p>Matters arising from previous meeting None reported</p>	
<p>Wetlands and Water Management- Catchment Management Partnerships</p>	<p>Zoe Channon- Director of Business Development and Nature Based Solutions, Surrey Wildlife Trust and Co-chairman of the Catchment Management Partnerships</p> <p>To update the Forum on the work of the Catchment Management Partnerships followed by a discussion on wetlands and water management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Zoe gave a presentation (attached) ● Hosting River catchment partnership with SyNP since 2012. ● Covers the River Wey and River Mole. Vision was created to cover healthy eco systems and water quality. ● Recently reassessed and there was little change. ● Funded by Environment Agency – WEIF Water Environment Improvement Funding. ● £15K per catchment area. ● South East Rivers Trust partnership – has made a real difference. ● Thames Water have become more involved with funding. 10K per catchment. In place for past two years. They've had to uplift their involvement. ● Many stakeholders. D&BC's. Canoe Clubs, Water Only Companies (e.g. Affinity Water) have a higher interest in the water quality. ● Farmers around river Wey looking at flood management and water quality. ● Many stakeholders have a vested Interest 	



	<p>Key activities: Quarterly steering groups. Partner updates and joint projects. Spotlight interests – floating pennywort. River Wey and Mole.</p> <p>South American Weevil has been introduced to feast on Floating pennywort. In the winter the populations die back due to the cold.</p> <p>LCG enquired about predators for the Weevils, given non native species. So far there is no evidence of an issue -TBD.</p> <p>Annual Event for bringing both catchments together. Much cross learning at the event. This Year it is being held at West Horsley Place</p> <p>Key Topic Focus Areas: Water Quality. State of Rivers. Natural Flood Management.</p> <p>Host specific catchment groups. Overall partnership governance – grant management, reporting, input to statutory consultations. E.g. Beaver reintroduction. Collective voice.</p> <p>Quarterly newsletter – covers the breadth of the work.</p> <p>Funding Bids – approached by organisations who are looking to offset the impact on the river.</p> <p>Last 10 years – river mapping, flood areas, quality issue locations. Groups of people assessing the Riverfly populations, mapping can show where the problems are. Key data source due to their sensitivity to pollution and also high quality data capture.</p> <p>Methodologies were varied across the groups – now all in alignment to produce data that can be used with the environment agency. Volunteer run – high quality of data. Can be used with other water organisations.</p> <p>Lots of agricultural land in Surrey – soil run off and soil structure issues that contribute to the river issues. Sewerage is also a big problem.</p> <p>It's a challenge to make a discernible difference.</p> <p>Limitations: Catchment partnerships are relying on people being put in to run them.</p> <p>Only some key individuals who can run large scale river projects due to their complexity.</p> <p>1 role is half funded by the environment agency. Core funding is from SWT. Previously difficult to get landowners engaged and involved – positive shift over past 2 years with better engagement.</p> <p>Vision for the overall River catchments is to get Multi Organisation plans with Project lists for each catchment - limitation on who can then write up the projects to apply for funding. Complex to work through.</p>	
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	<p>Environment Agency funding is challenging as requires a detailed and complex business plan with technical terminology. Back-claim funding, which means the organisation finds cash flow difficult as contractors are paid up front.</p> <p>Sights are set to focus on bigger scale projects.</p> <p>Nature markets, natural processes to look for funding in other places. No one has worked out a viable mechanism to get flood management funding on the ground.</p> <p>Bigger better, more connected areas – low money input but high value support.</p> <p>Q's AT – Success of Water Restoration Grant application. Haven't heard yet. Conglomeration of fines from water companies, given to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).</p> <p>LCG – What's the funding aimed at? Development grant i.e. to develop the project.</p> <p>You could only submit in certain areas – it's a National Fund so anticipate the funding is going to be evenly spread.</p> <p>Challenge is the timescale to gain funding for the (many) project ideas.</p> <p>RF – Flood Management – Build up of small projects that cumulatively have an impact, but funders don't tend to like smaller projects. Nature Based Solutions – e.g. Netherlands, large scale simple nature projects. Planning is a big issue in UK.</p> <p>Land use planning in counties is key. A wetland plan could be key.</p> <p>DEFRA are looking at creating a green paper to do a National Land Use Framework – Food security is a key driver.</p> <p>Sir (John) Lawton 80% environmental gain can come from 20% farming land. Most farms do not farm 100% of the land. Would make a big difference.</p> <p>Issue of planning – planning costs are high and affects delivery timescale. Funding can be affected by start dates delayed by planning timescales.</p> <p>Flood Risk team in SCC have funding, difficult to unlock due to the stipulations put on them. If planning constraints on the flood risk team could be alleviated it would make the process much easier.</p> <p>Smaller projects fit into the overall catchment plan.</p>	
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	<p>Annual Catchment Meeting is at West Horsley place so they can showcase the work done.</p> <p>Natural Environment Readiness project – seed corn funding from DEFRA. Flood modelling – assessed by EA, finance modelling then looking to see how it could be funded. If it works and improves the odds of funding, then it will become a replicable model.</p>	
<p>Surrey Nature Recovery update</p>	<p>LCG</p> <p>Nature Days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1200 people came through the event. ● 27-28 September. ● Schools day on the Friday – weather was poor. Kids seemed to enjoy the day. ● Family Day. Lots of activities for kids. Engagement was good with parents. Saturday was a good day with good weather. ● Plan to repeat as an Annual event. Debrief to follow. Venue worked well with the layout of the venue. Would look for a Sponsor for the event in future. <p>Autumn Area Workshops</p> <p>8 so far. Themed workshops. What nature do people want to see, and how do they see it happening.</p> <p>Next workshops: 8/10 West (Waverley Guildford and Surrey Heath), 17/10 (Woking, Elmbridge, Spelthorne, Runnymede 23/10 (Tandridge, Reigate & Banstead, Mole Valley, Epsom and Ewell).</p> <p>8/10 – Good take up for the event. 17/10 – Lower take up currently. Mayor of Spelthorne is due to come.</p> <p>Tuesday 8th October – G Live – Western Area focus – Waverley, Guildford and Surrey Heath</p> <p>Wednesday 23rd October – Bletchingley Golf Club – Eastern Area focus – Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead, Epsom and Ewell and Mole Valley</p> <p>**Please note the change of date and location for the event scheduled for Thursday 17th October – now Thursday 7th November – Woking – Northern Area focus - Elmbridge, Spelthorne, Runnymede and Woking</p> <p>The draft Map online Draft Baseline Map is live – Areas of Particular Important for Biodiversity: Our baseline mapping is now live for you to review – this is the regulatory baseline map and includes:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Designations (SAC, SPA, SSSI, NNR) - Local Nature Reserves - Local Wildlife Sites (SNCIs in Surrey) - Irreplaceable Habitats <p>Areas of Particular Importance to Biodiversity (APIB)</p>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea is to look at what should be done and what can lead to the desired outcomes. • Draft NRS. Due early Spring 2025 – public consultation. • LA's will see it in advance, adjoining authorities will also be part of it. • DEFRA aim is to pull together a map for the whole of England • Map is quite detailed. <p>Changes to the Surrey Nature Partnership Board and staff. New Administrator: Sophie Holt New Chairman: Richard Murphy</p>	
<p>Round table</p>	<p>Updates from all members of the Forum</p> <p>AT – Working Group Rye & Mole (Monday 7/10/24). 14 dams are being installed as part of a Carbon Sequestration project adjacent to the Rye.</p> <p>HJ – Leaky Dams. Cannot access some areas by boat to maintain the river. EA concerned about debris being released into the river, however they are supportive of the project. Governance review in Waverley. Embarking on the next stage for the SANG at Burpham Court Farm – subject to planning permission. Keen to improve reporting and using GIS systems. Play Pitch strategy - utilising S106 money. New SANG Ben's Wood (has suffered from some legal challenges). More infrastructure replacement. About to set a funding strategy for the infrastructure.</p> <p>TC (R&B) – New greenspace strategy. KPP external consultant to write the new strategy for the BC. Consultation has closed but can still submit via email. Cross country site. Tanyard's meadows – new Management Plan underway – large floodplain, South East in Bloom gave this site a Gold award and also received Silver Gilt awards for other sites– similar to Green Flag. Overall nature, access, furniture and playgrounds, well-kept area with horticultural influence.</p> <p>HC – Annual Report achieved 27650 volunteer hours, equivalent to £363,598 Livestock contributed – 1971000 grazing hours (Sheep cattle and goats). Considering negotiating the equivalent of the new higher level stewardship scheme. Successful FIPL grants for Polytunnel for plant nursery and electric power tools. Funding from Surrey Hills Access Fund for improving 5 promoted routes in north east Surrey.. 20 different companies volunteering with SCC. Corporate Volunteering Days – chargeable. Grant Application for City of London has just gone in.</p> <p>RF – Funding lots of tools purchases including for the Hampton Estate and Countryside Management Partnerships. Encouraging having an asset register, so that other organisations can come and borrow the tools.</p>	



	<p>LCG – Q: Are tools insured?</p> <p>RF: A - Considering SCC owning the tools and working on the loans. Depends on the tools (e.g. power tools need licencing). Planning a Countryside Skills Fair at Merrist Wood–Spring 2025. Planning around the extension areas for the AONB. Coming up into LB Croydon and South London nature Reserve. New Management Plan for Surrey Hills. 75 year plan. Survey going out to get feedback next week – to identify the strategic priorities for nature, climate and people and place. Events: 29th October and 7th November. Donut planning. 13th November Annual Symposium – theme: Nature Calling. Setting their vision for the next 75 years. Money for access this year. Working with the Lottery as part of the,– growing together scheme. Also working with the Coalition for disabled people – great to work with. Key is to ensure accessibility throughout. Landscape Connection programme £115M for large scale working partnerships, big chalk and meeting the Wildlife Trust – big project. Dogs – Public Space Protection Order. NFU & CLA – Dogs on leads in fields with Livestock. Risk Disease Neospora (from Dogs) causing health issues with Sheep and Cows in particular. PSPO – target working with landowners and farmer. Max 4 dogs per person in Reigate & Banstead.</p> <p>AB – Mole Valley DC Biodiversity Paper to articulate what they do. Members involved. 2 acre field next to sewerage works – interesting proposition. NT land directly opposite. Access plan for Boxhill estate – looking at ‘sacrificial areas’ for dogs off lead. Look to raise money instead of selling land. Action: (ZC) SWT to feed in with ideas as key ecological area.</p> <p>PL New SANG purchased. Tender for planning agent. Lift TPO on land. Surveys being undertaken for planning application. Esso pipeline – money to spend, going through list of items. Trees re surveyed (4 years) findings due next week – used a Quantified Tree Risk Assessment approach. Survey highest risk trees to people or property. Extended Grounds Maintenance contract with Glendale by 2 years. Started to rollout bin rationalisation projects (moving to mixed waste) – removing dog bins across the BC. Litter bins remain. Dog Bins in remote areas being replaced by regular litter bin – project to be completed by end of October. Tree work companies moving to a tender process for tree works packages.</p> <p>Tom Roberts – Expert on dog behaviour. Fear of dogs can be a driver for people not using local greenspace.</p> <p>ZC (SWT) Creating 5 landscape recovery areas in Surrey. Heathland, Northdowns, Cranleigh, Homesdale and Lingfield area. These are all in Biodiversity opportunity areas.(BOA) Meeting this week with</p>	
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Surrey Nature Partnership

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	<p>various stakeholders looking at the heathland space. Manage MOD land in Surrey. Heathland rewetting – flood mgmt., peat and carbon code, carbon sequestration. Multi Organisational partnership. Lead submission ENGO. Much bigger scale delivery. North Downs key arterial route. On the cusp of Managing Ashtead and Rye Meadows following a change with the current management team. Participate in BNG, having conversations with developers in Mole Valley. Newdigate Brickworks – ZC involved with negotiations. Ethical and due diligence process so developers understand where SWT sit. 20% BNG required. NE commissioned SWT as Landowner engagement team. Equine spaces being looked at, due to large land holding areas.</p>	
<p>Topics for Future Meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Biodiversity Duty ● Update on Code for Dog Walking and dogs in the countryside generally. ● Blue Heart verges, conservation verges 	
<p>Dates for next meetings</p>	<p>To Agree dates for 2025 proposed dates Tuesday 14th January 2025 10-12 Online Wednesday 9th April 14.00-16.00 Tuesday 1st July 10-12 Online Wednesday 8th October 14.00-16.00</p>	