

South Chilterns Sub- Catchment Stakeholder Workshops Facilitator's Report

Pang, 8th February 2013, held in Hampstead Norreys.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE WORKSHOPS

1. Raise awareness of the Water Framework Directive and the collaborative approach DEFRA want to develop for Catchment Management.
2. To hear from the Environment Agency about the current state of the rivers and waterways in each sub catchment and why it's important to improve them.
3. To find out what concerns people have about the management of water in the catchment.
4. To begin to develop a vision for the Catchment and identify what kind of projects and actions will contribute towards achieving the vision.
5. Enthuse organisations, both statutory and non-statutory, to look for opportunities to work together in the future.
6. Encourage networking between organisations and individuals who have an interest in the sub catchment.

1. The Wider Context for Catchment Planning and the Water Framework Directive: presentation from Alison Futter, Environment Agency.

2. The issues in this Catchment and some examples of what has already been done to improve things: presentation from Jenni Balmer, Environment Agency.

3. Questions and clarifications following the presentations:

- the sub catchment is different from the other two because it is more natural, not so heavily modified.
- WFD (Water Framework Directive) encompasses other directives about flood and waste, important to keep a strategic over view.
- EA admits that there are some holes in monitoring data and there is very little for some water bodies. In those cases they rely on judgement and local knowledge. They are working to improve monitoring.

4. A Vision for a healthy and sustainable Pang Sub Catchment

Note: this was produced by grouping together post-its notes to agree key themes. The facilitator asked people what they would see on a 'miracle day'.

ACCESS AND RECREATION

- better access and riverside footpaths
- this will help to raise awareness and appreciation of the river
- historic features maintained and explained
- reinstate access to dipping platform just below Blue Pool - was used by children on visits to Rushall Manor Farm (change of ownership)

PEOPLE AWARE OF WATER AS A VALUABLE & LIMITED RESOURCE

- reduce water consumption
- education & awareness raising (all ages)
- local communities working together
- a national strategy on water use
- reduction of flooding a 'selling point'

WORKING TOGETHER

- co-ordinated management
- landowner, farmers and public understanding their responsibilities
- AONB and EA working together
- a multi-functional river, valued for heritage and wildlife as well as a for a water resource.
- balancing the demands for abstraction, hydro power, ecological enhancement, farming, historical structures, flood mitigation schemes and new developments.
- planning controls to ensure the natural river is protected
- sustainable abstraction

NATURAL RIVERS

- no culverts and barriers, more meanders, natural, well managed banks
- healthy variety of wildlife
- invasive non-native species under control (INNS OUT!)
- protected habitats

BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE

- conservation of whole river landscape
- flood plains, water meadows retained
- valuing heritage
- incentives to plant buffer strips

GOOD FLOWS

- natural water storage
- reduced abstraction

HIGH STATUS FOR WATER QUALITY

- control of silt, road run off and other pollution sources
- sewage outfall reduced

5. Ideas for actions to work towards the vision.

Note: people worked together in small groups to come up with ideas. A full type up of the notes from each group is in appendix 1 on page 4.

6. Final feedback from each group and plenary discussion.

Group 1. Education was the most important issue, especially aimed at raising awareness among young people who then teach their parents to value water. Build on existing good practice such as Rushall Manor Farm.

Group 2. This group also saw education and awareness raising as a priority and suggested developing an app for smart phones to help inform walkers along the rivers. They also suggested more involvement of volunteers in monitoring, such as the River Fly Project, walkers reporting evidence of runoff etc.

Group 3. It is essential to work together, a more integrated approach can achieve more. Getting farmers and landowners on board is a challenge but necessary. Important to remember to balance their commercial interests with environmental conservation.

Group 4. It is a challenge to get volunteers involved, people get bored easily, word of mouth and seeing what can be achieved & understanding the value of protecting and preserving habitats is the best way. Also need to be very well organised, could use groups like Green Gym and Newbury Young Offenders who have trained leaders. Try to create opportunities for families to get involved.

The West Berkshire Farming and Countryside Project will be working with farmers and landowners in the Pang valley.

Neil Tytler from the Foundation for Water Research (FWR) explained that FWR has offered its website (www.fwr.org) as a place to find out about progress on the Catchment Management Plan. It is hoped that all interested organisations will work together and form a steering group to work with the EA to develop and deliver more integrated Catchment management to achieve a healthy sustainable water environment.

7. Summary of individual feedback forms.

7.1 Five people thought we had fully met our objectives, twelve thought almost fully met with one person saying we had only partially met the objectives.

7.2 People found it very useful to meet other interested parties, to exchange ideas and hear about different projects. The EA's presentations were also useful for setting the scene.

7.3 Key messages for taking forward the Catchment Management Plan:

- work together & get the right people
- involve local people
- coordinate activities
- educate the wider public
- focus on delivery and a few key issues
- don't be afraid to be tough
- provide incentives
- please involve North Wessex Downs AONB

7.4 The facilitation, the venue & the lunch were all very good.

8. Other Comments left on the large scale map.

- Bats are hibernating at car park Moor Copse under A340, Hogmoor Bridge.
- Purley on Thames: three flood events in last 3 months.
- Rights of Way Improvement Act has identified new access.
- New project working on Pang, working with farmers and landowners; West Berkshire Farming and Countryside Project.

Appendix 1 : Ideas for Actions

Note: similar ideas were grouped together.

Ideas	Who could lead on it and be involved?
<i>Full catchment walkover required</i>	<i>EA</i>
<p><i>Education:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>e.g.s trout in the classroom, river fly monitoring projects</i> • <i>link between what is found in the river & water quality</i> • <i>understanding the link between water use and availability in the rivers</i> • <i>linking education projects together</i> • <i>controlled access</i> • <i>develop an app for smart phones</i> • <i>muddy walks - use volunteers to check for sources of run off & siltation</i> • <i>education pack for Pang Valley School</i> • <i>education programme for local farmers</i> 	<p><i>Wild Trout Trust, EA, River Fly Partnership, FWR, AONB</i></p> <p><i>Interested teachers, John Simons Trust (countryside education), W Berks Farming and Countryside Project, W Berks Countryside Society, BBOWT, CPRE, ramblers, local parishes, WTT, Gerald Palmer -Ealing Trust</i></p>
<p><i>Communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>via village phone booths, notice boards and other local unusual outlets</i> • <i>Landowners need someone to coordinate communication between them and others</i> 	<p><i>Local Authorities, Parish Councils, local environment groups</i></p> <p><i>W Berks Farming and Countryside Project or W Berks Countryside Society</i></p>
<p><i>Enhancements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify and remove or replace structures but need incentives i.e. reduced flooding</i> • <i>restore natural morphology of the river and accommodate artificial systems like water meadows</i> 	<p><i>EA to lead and work with others e.g District Archeologist, Wild Trout Trust, land owners</i></p> <p><i>Landowners & farmers are key</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>inegrated landscape on each side of the water body</i> 	
<p><i>Access</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>determine where access is blocked & find out reason, see if permission can be gained where appropriate</i> • <i>incentivise landowners to allow access (e.g. HLS)</i> 	<p><i>Parish Councils, Landonwers, PROW (a local access forum) rambblers, conservation volunteers, Natural England etc</i></p>
<p><i>Water Quality & Quantity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>investigate effects of STWs in upper river discharging onto dry bed and accummulating phosphates</i> • <i>investigate what is sustainable abstraction level</i> • <i>reduce water usage</i> 	<p><i>Thames Water, EA, every body!</i></p>
<p><i>Working together:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>prioritising objectives</i> • <i>aim for collaboration between stakeholders</i> • <i>engage with landowners</i> 	<p><i>A steering group with all interested bodies represented, lead by EA/FWR</i></p>
<p><i>OFWAT to agree RSA to be in PR14</i></p>	<p><i>National but local input!</i></p>

ATTENDEES

NAME	ORGANISATION
Maxine Forshaw	FWR
Neil Tytler	FWR
Jenni Balmer	Environment Agency
Alison Futter	Environment Agency
Rowena Harris	Dialogue by Design
Jeremy Davy	West Berkshire Council
Sally Wallington	West Berks. Farming & Countryside Project
Keith Johnson	Kennet Valley Fishery Association
Dick Greenaway	West Berkshire Countryside Society
Dick Mayon-White	River Thames Society
Lesley Sproat	Environment Agency
Janice Smith	Environment Agency
Colin Layton	Hampstead Norreys Parish Council
Richard Benyon	Minister for the Environment
Daryl Henehan	Thames Water
Julia Simpson	Environment Agency
Paul Forrest-Jameson	The Conservation Volunteers
Ray Clayton	Pang Valley Group, Ramblers Association
Alistair Blacknell	Englefield Estates
Mark Owen	Angling Trust
Dell Shackelford	Reading & District Angling Association
Henry Oliver	North Wessex Downs AONB
Amanda Beard	Basildon Park, National Trust

NAME	ORGANISATION
George Betts	Farmer and Hampstead Norreys Parish Councillor
Bernard Nix	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council
Adam Hilliard	Environment Agency South East
Ross Agutter	Environment Agency
Travis Kelly	Environment Agency
Elaine Cox	West Berkshire Council