

**LIFE 3 Project Management Team Meeting**  
**ACW Conference room, Hampshire County Council**  
**10:00- 1200 Friday 10 February 2006**

## Minutes

### Present:

Bryan Boulton (Chair - HCC)	Grace Ford (Forestry Commission)
Caroline Bird (HCC)	Doug England (National Trust)
Erica Meadus (HCC)	John C' Ailceta (Environment Agency)
Darren Crowfoot (HCC)	Maxine Elliott (Environment Agency)
Jonathan Mycock (HCC)	Kevin Penfold (Forestry Commission)
Issy Whatmore (Minutes - HCC)	Phil Marshall (National Trust)
Bruce Rothnie, (Forestry Commission)	

### 1. Apologies

Received from Russell Wright (EN) and Carrie Temple (RSPB)

### 2. Minutes

Minutes of previous meeting were reviewed and agreed.

### 3. Matters arising

As a response was not received by the EC to discuss the financial implications of the current situation, this PMT meeting did not need to be brought forward.

JM explained that HCC have written to the EC to get clarification about internal trading and also about budget spending and whether or not we use the original budget headings or if money has to be reallocated, as per some of the advice given by the monitors. He explained that HCC are still waiting for written confirmation from the EC.

JM explained that although Amanda Craig had agreed to lead on the After-LIFE conservation plan on behalf of EN she had subsequently left, and he had since been in talks with the FC about taking this on. JM will pick up this up later on in the meeting.

JM then noted that the Spanish LIFE project visit was cancelled by them in the end, with no reason given.

**ACTION:** JM to let partners know as soon as HCC receive a response from the EC

#### 4. Project Management

- **Project Managers report**

JM reported that he had updated the WBMF on the project management and communications work at the meeting on 9 November 2005. In addition he has been working on the follow up of the submission of the interim financial claim and the third progress report, which was sent off at the beginning of February to the EC. JM thanked partners for their comments on the third progress report.

JM has been liaising with the HCC Legal Department about the amendments to the Partnership Agreement and he will send the new agreement out to partners shortly. He has also been liaising with EA regarding their proposed restoration works this year and working on the end of project events.

BB reiterated to partners that there is a great deal of work to fit in before the end of the project and that all works must be completed. JM handed out a paper which summarised the final year issues and concerns for the remainder of the project.

The EA have still got some remedial works to carry out this year and will be delaying starting works at Rhinefield until after the first end of project event on 2 June 2006. The EA are still to complete and write up the biological and physical work that has been carried out, including the work by University of Southampton students.

JM has been out on site visit with the FC to look at their restoration work and discuss quantifying the work and mapping it on the GIS system. At present the FC have 78 hectares of riverine and bog woodland restoration remaining. JM suggested that monitoring the work on the ground could be done in conjunction with EN, who need to carry out site condition assessment monitoring.

HCC are required to organise the end of project events, produce a Layman's Report and the final project report. In addition HCC will also be processing claims 11-13 and the final SOE, which will then be audited.

The NT will need to complete the coppicing along Dockens Water and produce before and after photographs.

The RSPB have largely completed their work in the form of the Waders Survey.

BB asked each partner to run through their individual work plans for the final project to reassure the PMT that works will be completed on time.

KP said that the FC have worked on all of the required sites and that as the work is 2-3 years old now it is possible to see the type of vegetation and the type of habitat that is starting to develop. Some of the areas that are categorised as riverine woodland has

now been opened up to grazing and is developing into lawns. KP will be liaising with Jane Smith (JS) to survey the work that the FC has done. JS will be looking at the FC sites and categorising the habitat that has been worked on to see what type of habitat it is likely to return to, and mapping the size of the area restored as accurately as possible. This will be captured on GIS by the end of March so that any areas that they are short of can be quantified and dealt with before July. Some of the proposed restoration areas were held up in consultations but at the same time, mire habitat has developed in areas that were riverine woodland.

There is provision in the bid allowing for a contingency of 20% of the mire area (i.e. 37 ha) to be un-restored at the end of the project due to difficulties with consultations on some sites. This would be completed after the end date.

BB emphasised the importance of consulting with EN as they will be doing the condition assessment monitoring on the habitats defined by the partners doing the ground work. BB noted that if works are signed off by EN then the contract has been met because EN agree that the habitat has been restored to a suitable condition.

ME asked how the definition of the habitats matches up with the requirements of the bid and KP agreed that they need to look at what is currently developing in these areas. KP suggested that the partners centre on the key measurable bid requirements and make judgements as to what types of habitats will develop in the future.

ME pointed out that some of the work done by the EA has helped to restore areas of woodland so this could be included in the total area of restored woodland. Questions were raised about the financial implications for doing this and BB suggested that FC, EA and NT get together to look at the figures to see how much has been restored and by which partner. KP noted that GIS is a good way of getting figures for amount of area restored depending on where the boundaries are drawn. ME asked if JS will be mapping out areas for all partners and it was agreed that it would be helpful if all partners areas could be included in this.

ME gave an update on proposed EA works. The EA will be doing further works at Blackensford, taking about 3 weeks, and about a week of work at Highland Water. The main bulk of work that needs to be done is at Rhinefield, and following design meetings and results from the modelling work, there is potentially 6-8 weeks of work there. All of these works and timescales are weather dependant. Some topographical survey work has been carried out, which can be imported into ArcMap and then copied to JS.

ME then noted that Peter Dratwa (EA) will be leaving from March which is unfortunate and at a critical time for the project design work to be done. ME is working out how this can be managed with no impact on the future restoration works for the project.

ME noted that the EA project team have assured ME that the bulk of the work will be done within the proposed timescale. ME noted that the fish survey work will not be done because they cannot survey earlier than late May/early June to be consistent with earlier surveys, so the EA will not be able to claim for this work. ME has been assured that the invertebrate monitoring and work done by Southampton University students will be delivered on time.

ME noted that the restoration works are often weather dependent and it is sometimes difficult to estimate timescales for work programmes. However a certain amount of fish stunning can take place in order to move fish if need be, but this is not a preferred option. The works at Rhinefield will start on 5 June.

DE reported that the NT had finished the coppicing along Dockens Water and has taken before and after photographs of this work. The NT will be asking the FC and EN to provide advice on the finishing off of the NT work this year. DE noted that he will need to talk to the FC about mapping the amount of bog woodland that has been restored by the NT and that they will be able to decide which areas they think will turn into bog woodland habitat in the future. There is some tidying up to do at Newlands Plantation as the majority of restoration work has been completed there. He reported that the NT have been discussing with the commoners about bringing the fencing down to introduce grazing in this area – this had been agreed with the commoners and verderers..

There is currently no report from EN as Amanda Craig is no longer working on the project and Russell Wright was unable to make this meeting. However EN are required to sign off all project restoration works before the end of the project.

**ACTION:** JM to send out new Partnership Agreement to partners shortly.

**ACTION:** EA to complete and write up the biological and physical work that has been carried out, including the work by University of Southampton students.

**ACTION:** FC and EA to look at their restoration areas to see how much has been restored and by which partner.

**ACTION:** FC to ensure that all partner restoration works are mapped out on their GIS system if possible.

**ACTION:** ME to clarify with Peter Dratwa how much of the 6-8 weeks planned work at Rhinefield is the EA's allowance for weather.

**ACTION:** EN to sign off all project restoration works before the end of the project.

## 5. Financial Management

EM reported that the second tranche of money is now in the bank. She then ran through a general breakdown of the maximum that can be paid out to partners prior to receipt of the final tranche. The money received relates to the original bid (as this is the official EU contract) and the allocation is based on the revised phased spend plan. Approximately 73% of the grant can be paid to partners from tranche 1 and 2 and the table showed how this was going to be allocated to each partner. There is €273,000 left that can be paid out to partners from claim 10 onwards and once the maximum is reached we cannot pay out any further monies until the final claim has been submitted, audited and paid.

EM noted that all outstanding authorised agreed claim 8 and 9's can be paid, but the new partner agreement needs to be signed before the balance of the money can be paid out.

HCC are still waiting for confirmation from the European Commission about the bid and once we receive answers HCC will still need to look at the budget monitoring figures and get the claims in order as there will be differences to the claims that partners originally submitted. This also applies to monitoring the exchange rate and this can start to be monitored more closely once we have received clarification from the EC.

HCC Finance have received claims 9 and 10 from partners except NT. NT's claim 8 also required additional information re-personnel costs. EM reiterated that all invoices need to contain the correct LIFE3 reference. She also noted that the partners must meet the deadline for the final SOE to ensure that it goes off on time.

JC noted that the EA had not received anything for claim 8 or 9 and asked when they would receive it. EM said that once partners have signed the new partner agreement then HCC Finance can start looking at all the back claims. JC asked if claims 8 and 9 could be paid at the beginning of March if the signing of the new partnership agreement is held up. EM agreed and also said that much of claim 10 could also be paid off once the new agreement was signed.

ME asked about the modification as she is concerned about going ahead with EA restoration works when the modification has currently been suspended for the time being and the EA works may mean that more money will have to be moved around certain budget headings.

EM said that as it stands we would still need to do a modification but there may be some additional changes following the response from the EC and the final costing of extra EA works. The SAP states that a modification needs to be submitted if you are 10% under or over. The biggest concern is external assistance spend as we cannot spend more than 35% of total budget on this category and we are likely to go over

35%. EM requested that the EA provide updated budget figures including planned extra works that are as accurate as possible in the phased spend format.

EM noted that all works must be undertaken in line with agreement by the EC and changes agreed beforehand. Without agreement these works are undertaken at the partners own risk. At present the EC are working towards the original bid, as that is the official agreement, even though we have submitted a modification which was withdrawn. A lot depends on the guidance and feedback that we get from the EC as then we can start to categorise costs more accurately. EM noted that we are trying to clarify the issue of internal business trading with the EC as well as clarifying the budget heading categories and until this is done, we won't know how much we need to move between categories.

BB then emphasised that this situation is very complex and that no other feedback could be given to partners until we had received guidance and feedback from the EC. JM noted that the process of getting in contact with the EC via the monitors means that it takes extra time to get responses. It was agreed that all partners would continue to work towards the agreed revised budgets for the time being. A meeting may be held to discuss any changes if required.

**ACTION:** NT to send in claims 9 and 10 to HCC Finance.

**ACTION:** All partners to ensure that they use the correct reference on LIFE3 claim paperwork

**ACTION:** HCC Finance to pay claims 8 and 9 in March if the signing of the new partnership agreement is held up.

**ACTION:** EA to provide HCC Finance with budget figures by the end of February, and that are as accurate as possible, for forthcoming restoration works.

## 6. Communications.

### • Communications Coordinator Report

IW reported that the Communications Team met on 10 Jan and discussed how to get an article into a major environmental magazine and the project photo index. The project entered the RSPB/CIWEM Living Wetlands Award 2006 but were unsuccessful. IW then highlighted several project events including a site visit hosted by the FC and EA for delegates from the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) conference. IW noted that the Issue 5 newsletter is currently being compiled and will be printed and distributed shortly. A final project newsletter will be produced in July 2006.

A Layman's report will be produced by HCC which will be a short non-technical summary of the projects achievements. IW then highlighted several recent articles including a front page article in the EA's Grassroots magazine. She then noted that we are currently looking into how the website can be continued following the end of the project. The EA have produced two new visitor interpretation boards that will be put up at project restoration sites shortly.

- **End of project events**

IW ran through the first end of project event and noted that top speakers from all partner organisations had been confirmed and that the invitation to the guests for this event will be going out shortly. These guests will also be taken to Black Water Arboretum for the guest talk at 2pm followed by a visit to the Black Water river to see LIFE3 restoration works.

The LIFE3 public event will also held on this day at Black Water Arboretum and will include family activities, a showing of the project video and regular site visit walks. IW then ran through the various ways that this event will be promoted and noted that a press release will be sent out by HCC prior to the event.

BB thanked the partners for the work that they carried out on getting their organisation speaker.

KP asked if he could see the list of people that are being invited and IW confirmed that about 5 or 6 were going to be invited from each partner. PM asked if a timetable for the morning event can be circulated. BR relayed a suggestion from Alan Drinkwater for WBMF members to be formally thanked and for them to sign a series of statements or sign off the wetland management plan at the event. IW said that this could be worked into the programme.

IW noted that she is currently trying to get Chris Packham to do the guest talk and KP said that he could contact him that evening. IW said that HCC will also be sending out a list of bullet points for each partner organisation speaker to cover.

The second event is the technical conference. This would focus on the fact that it is a catchment scale project which is quite unique, and this will hopefully draw in delegates to book places. The first day would be held at Careys Manor Hotel and would consist of speakers looking at wetland restoration on a European, national and local level, followed by a talk on the aims, objectives and achievements of the LIFE3 project. The afternoon would consist of workshops covering areas such as surveys, public consultation, river restoration techniques and other restoration areas. The day would close with speeches on future planning and funding, followed by an after dinner speaker.

Day two of the conference would consist of visits to a variety of project restoration sites. The conference programme will be produced and sent out once the speakers

have been finalised. There are 80 spaces for the conference but at least 20 of these will be taken up by speakers.

KP suggested that the technical conference ideas were passed to Jonathan Spencer to advise on speakers.

BB said that the conference programme covers a wide range of issues and that the speakers now need to be confirmed and he then thanked the Communications Team for their work on the end of project events.

**ACTION:** IW to send partners the final list of invitees for the signing off event.

**ACTION:** IW to include a signing off presentation to the WBMF, into the programme for the first end of project event on Friday 2 June 2006.

**ACTION:** IW to send the technical conference ideas to Jonathan Spencer for comment.

## 7. Progress Reports

DE reported that in terms of the NT survey work, their biological survey team confirmed that they will be doing some follow up to the work that has been carried out at Newlands Plantation so far.

There was nothing else to report from partners as this had been covered under agenda item 4.

## 8. Work plans - Spring/Summer 2006

There was nothing to report from partners as this had been covered under item 4.

## 9. WBMF

BR reported that he had met with GF and Alan Drinkwater recently to discuss the next WBMF meeting. There will be a final site tour so that the WBMF members can see the restoration works in May and asked partners for their thoughts on which areas could be visited. Also included in the agenda will be the end of project events and then the future of the WBMF in the form of inviting them to an annual tour to see the progress of the work. BR noted that there are several other Forums in the New Forest which could be brought together for regular stakeholder events to follow up on works including LIFE3. This will include inviting the New Forest National Park along as a stakeholder. BR noted that some further presentations on works may occur in the Autumn on works that cannot be discussed in the next Forum meeting.

The second part of the WBFM meeting will focus on work programmes and wetland management plans. JS has now produced a draft plan and an executive summary will be available at the Forum. JS has offered to discuss any elements of the plan with the forum members up to two weeks following the meeting. The deadline for providing comments on the plan is mid-March.

BB asked if BR could change the order of the agenda so that the members think about where the Forum might go at the end of the project and the future of the forum. BB noted that he had a recent meeting with Lindsay Cornish, CEO of the New Forest National Park to discuss the LIFE3 project and its continuation following the end of the project. BR suggested that he would try and get Stephen Trotter, Director of Conservation, to the next Forum meeting.

BR explained that the statement of support would involve getting the members to sign off some comments of support in the form of a series of quotes, to be presented at the end of project events.

BR explained that JS had been liaising with the EA about making a link with the New Forest Wetland Management Plan and stakeholder engagement but at the moment it is uncertain how this can be linked, but this will be included in the final plan. The importance of some form of continuation of stakeholder engagement was highlighted and bringing in the New Forest National Park Authority. BR then explained that the FC have commissioned a consultant under rural Pathfinder to work on reviewing stakeholder engagement for land management work in the New Forest, which includes the WBMF. BR will talk to the WBMF to get feedback on how this can be taken forward. The financing of future stakeholder engagement will also have to be discussed at the next WBMF meeting.

KP then highlighted the excellent work that JS has done on producing the New Forest Wetland Management plan. However it would be helpful if comments from each partner organisation could be summarised rather than send in separate comments from each member of staff.

**ACTION:** BR to change the order of the WBMF meeting agenda and put consultation/information at the end rather than at the beginning.

**ACTION:** Partners to provide comments to JS on the draft New Forest Wetland Management Plan by mid-March.

**ACTION:** BR to discuss with WBMF members about the continuation of the stakeholder engagement following the end of the project

## 10. After-LIFE conservation plan

JM reported that although EN had initially agreed to do the After-LIFE conservation plan, Amanda Craig has now moved on and JM has been discussing with the FC the possibility that they can take this on instead. The New Forest Wetland Management Plan is being produced by the FC and a summary of this can be produced as the After-LIFE conservation plan, together with a covering letter to the EC. This plan will be included with the final report to the EC.

**ACTION:** FC to provide a summary of the New Forest Wetland Management Plan for the After-LIFE conservation plan.

**ACTION:** JM to write a covering letter to accompany the After-LIFE conservation plan.

## 11. AOB

- **Green Week**

BB noted that the theme for this years Green Week in Brussels is Biodiversity and HCC have been asked to give a presentation on Thursday 1 June.

KP noted that the South East Regional group of the Institute of Chartered Foresters want to meet on 7 June which is the next PMT meeting and asked if we should bring the next PMT forward. It was agreed that 25 May 2006 would be the date for the next meeting.

KP also mentioned that there might be an opportunity to visit the Spanish LIFE project who were due to come over here and visit but unfortunately cancelled. KP asked if the bid would allow this type of visit and HCC agreed to look into this and let KP know. KP can then make enquiries to see if a visit can be arranged.

JM noted that he has been asked to lead a workshop on partnership working at the annual River Restoration Conference in Edinburgh this year. In addition, he has been in contact with a senior journalist from our project monitors team who has asked to come and find out about LIFE2 project. JM will find out when partners are available to conduct a site visit

**ACTION:** HCC to find out if the bid would allow a visit to the Spanish LIFE project.

**ACTION:** KP to make enquiries into the possibility of visiting the Spanish LIFE project that were due to visit us in November 2005.

**ACTION:** JM to check partners availability for a visit from a journalist from the project monitors.

**12. Date of next meeting**

Thursday 25 May 2006, ACW Conference Room, Hampshire County Council.