

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Steering Group

Minutes of Steering Group Meeting on 4th March 2024

Present:

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| Fran Lancaster | FL | Principal Natural Environment Officer HC |
| Rhiannon Pierce | RP | Senior Advisor Natural England |
| Emma Whitehouse | EW | Environment Agency |
| Liz Duberley | LD | Service Manager Built and Natural Environment HC |
| Emma Gardner | EG | Ecologist (HBRC) |
| Alan Reid | ER | Forestry Commission |
| Katheryn Austin-Bailey | KAB | Talk Community HC |
| Amelia Airey | AA | Nature Recovery Officer HC |

Apologies:

| | | |
|---------------|----|---|
| Andrew Blake | AB | Wye Valley AONB and representing Malvern Hills AONB |
| Claire Spicer | CS | Herefordshire Wildlife Trust |

1. Welcome

The group welcomed Amelia Airey as Herefordshire Council's new Nature Recovery Officer.

The group welcomed Pat Stirling, Friends of the River Wye, to present.

2. Update from Pat Stirling from Friends of the River Wye

Pat Stirling – Citizen Scientist Programme Manager

- Outlined his role organising citizen scientist and the purpose of the Wye Catchment Partnership (arisen from NE identifying the SSSI being 'unfavourable and declining').
- Demonstrated the online platform showing locations of projects within the Wye catchment. The data is open source and available in a spreadsheet, updated quarterly. New projects identified by a questionnaire and requires a Shape file to be uploaded.
- Stated the aspirations of the management plan for the Wye Catchment using modelling and baseline data

[Wye Catchment Project Areas and Funding - Google My Maps](#)

The group discussed how this can feed into LNRS including the use of project data will be useful for reporting on nature recovery and what has been delivered and to see if projects already underway to could be included as potential measures.

It was decided that the steering group would engage with project owners and to extract project layer from Wye Valley map (prior: make contact with project owners) to include in projects being delivered layer for the LNRS,

ACTIONS:

RP to forward on correspondence when appropriate to HC.

3. Minutes

There were no actions arising from previous minutes.

4. Engagement update

FL and LD gave an overview and update on progress being made, with increased capacity to push things forward with AA joining. The engagement plan has now been drafted, including the wider project plan using a Gantt-chart (attached to minutes)

It was suggested that the beginning of each steering group to give an update of where we are on the Gantt chart. This should be shared and set out on the tracker when the steering group is being consulted and a steering group decision is to be made.

It was agreed that DEFRA media will be used instead of creating own video due to time of year.

ACTIONS:

Steering group to review Gantt-chart to be approved.

5. Design update

Update on design work which has now been commissioned, and will be shared with steering group with a week to receive feedback, and decide on a direction to finalise a logo.

6. Strategy update

The specification has been drafted for the written portion of the strategy, to be reviewed internally then will share with the steering group shortly.

7. Project Plan

FL gave an overview on progress for the wider project work with species work being on track to be completed early April and deliver first species engagement in late April, mapping is in hand and no cause for concern it will not be ready by April. Decisions on how to map and display LNRS to be decided.

8. Mapping Update

Baseline mapping has been completed. Inclusion of statutory sites, Local Wildlife Sites and irreplaceable habitats. A brief overview of the baseline map was displayed, with several different colour pallets and decisions that will need to be made on this in the future. In addition to how veteran trees are to be displayed.

RP raised discussion of inclusion of Local Geological Sites (LGS), within the base mapping. The steering group raised the wider implications of this

It was agreed it would adhere to NE guidelines for the baseline mapping, noting that this does not preclude it being incorporated into the opportunity mapping.

Questions around interpretation of the guidance to be answered by RP, local decisions to be decided as a steering group

ACTIONS:

EG to reach out to individuals that will be relevant to the GIS task and finish group. Any local decisions regarding the methodology need to be made.

EG to circulate GWT video on mapping process to task and finish group and steering group members

9. Species Work

FL gave an update on the species process to create a longlist of species that are found within the county. Progress is 450 species, with birds and fungi left to do. Expectation is around 500 species from an initial list of 2,000. Process of 'shortlisting' and 'species assemblages' being discussed with NE, with criteria to dictate which species will be dealt with by habitat intervention and which species need targeted actions.

EW requested an EA representative to sit on the task and finish group regarding aquatic species. This needs to be arranged in advance to ensure a specialist is available.

ACTIONS:

EG to carry forward the species work, including finishing species longlisting and start to engaging with individuals late April.

EG to email and make contact with EA representative

10. Date for next meeting

ACTIONS:

AA to do a doodle-poll for next meeting date week commencing 8th April.

11. A.O.B

EW – The same resources are stretched across several LNRS and the more notice when specialist may be required is welcomed.

KAB – Not sure of the value of attending regular steering group meetings but specifics for community engagement will attend when requested.