



Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016, 10.30-12.30, Humberhead Peatlands, Natural England, Unit 1a, Green Tree Warehousing, Tudworth Road, Hatfield, DN7 6HD

**Attendees:** Paul Duncan (PD), Helen Kirk (HK), Tim Kohler (TK), Melissa Masserella (MM), Roger Mitchell (RM), Sue Wilkinson (SW)

**Apologies:** Caroline Steel (CS), James Freeborough (JF), Matt Blissett (MB), David Hinchliffe (DNH), John Dunbavin (JD), Tim Allen (TA)

**Support staff:** David Hargreaves (DPH), Amanda Lane (AJL)

Discussions/Key Points	For Action By
<p><b>1. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising – PD</b></p> <p>PD welcomed members to the meeting and wished them a Happy New Year. Apologies were noted.</p> <p>PD invited members to read through the minutes from the previous meeting and the actions were discussed, as noted below:</p> <p><u>Action 1 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Water Level Management Plan</u> – PD informed members that the HRA for the Water Level Management Plan is covered in general by Natural England. However, the individual projects that sit underneath the Water Level Management Plan will each have their own HRA. HK asked whether the HRA had been seen for the pumping station, including clarification on what the HRA had been based on. TK understood that the HRA will be carried out on the pumping station engineering drawings which had subsequently gone out to tender. TK agreed to contact Darren Whittaker at the DE IDB for confirmation and sight of the HRA for the pumping station.</p> <p><u>Action 2 – Redrafted version of Stakeholder Analysis grid to Steering Group</u></p> <p><u>Action 3 – Meeting of Science and Monitoring Sub Group</u> – TK informed the Group that he would provide an update on the sub group meeting under the agenda item on ‘Progress Update’.</p> <p><u>Action 4 – Casson’s Gardens article for Moor Space – Issue 2</u></p> <p><u>Action 5 – Water level Management Plan Information online</u> – PD confirmed that the minutes, papers and declarations of interest do appear on the WLMP project website. SW clarified that the information was provided by JBA and had little to do with the DE IDB. HK</p>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> TK to contact Darren Whittaker at the DE IDB for sight of the HRA for the pumping station.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>



commented that the level and detail of information that now appeared on the website was negligible compared to what had been published on the website in the past. PD clarified that the information does provide an overview of spend but it was important to consider what was required by the LIFE+ project, and that was invoices and contracts. DPH confirmed that the information required for the LIFE+ project is evidence of procurement, including contracts and invoices. He did comment that reassurances in relation to the speed and amount of monies being spent from the IDB were useful for the LIFE+ project.

Action 6 – DE IDB Budget Sheet – PD commented that although there was an overview of the budget a more detailed breakdown would be useful. HK asked if what was currently being provided gave enough of a steer for the LIFE+ Project, and that the previous practice had changed in terms of the level of detail. DPH did clarify that the budget was the responsibility DE IDB and not the ownership of JBA. RM asked how onerous it was to produce detailed budget information on a monthly compared to quarterly basis. SW clarified that the budget information provided (overview) was as a result of the new budget headings that had resulted as an outcome of the finance audit that had taken place January 2015. PD commented that the DE IDB finance group would get more detailed budget information which would then feed through into the budget overview presented to the DE IDB Board. He confirmed that he would discuss this at the next meeting of the Water Level Management Plan Steering Group as to whether a detailed budget breakdown could be made available.

Action 7 – Craig Benson to attend LIFE+ Project Steering Group meetings – PD clarified that this was in response to only having, at the time, one DE IDB representative on the LIFE+ Steering Group. PD welcomed Sue Wilkinson as the new DE IDB representative. SW did say that she felt there was logic in having CB in attendance as he would be able to answer questions in relation to finance. HK also agreed with this logic. PD commented that having a detailed breakdown of the budget, as discussed in action 6 would help.

Action 8 – Circulate NIA report

Action 9 – Circulate Invertebrate Assemblage methodology

Action 10 – Clarification on Planning for Real Events – DPH confirmed that he had been in contact with the EU Monitor reference the requirements of the Planning for Real events. The details of the EU Monitor’s response were in the letter (1<sup>st</sup> Missive) that had been circulated prior to the steering group meeting. DPH explained that as the LIFE+ project had gone beyond its planning stage and was up and running there would not be anything that the general public could be

**Action 2:** PD to ask, at the next Water Level Management Plan Steering Group, whether a detailed budget breakdown could be made available.

Completed

Completed

**Action 3:** TK and DPH to meet to discuss the number, dates and format of the Planning for Real events.



<p>consulted on. However, the Management Plan which forms part of the AfterLife plan for the project would be the basis on which the community could be consulted. DPH did stress that the project's ambitions for 9 Planning for Real events throughout the life of the project was not feasible and this would be communicated to the EU in the mid-term report, along with the justification. However, general community engagement events will still take place where members of the local community can find out more about and get involved in the LIFE+ project. DPH confirmed that he would meet with TK to discuss the number, dates and format for the Planning for Real events.</p> <p><u>Action 11 – Yellow route on Thorne Moors – Moor Space Issue 1</u></p> <p><u>Action 12 – Accessibility of Associated Beneficiary financial information to the LIFE+ Steering Group</u> – PD confirmed that this was still ongoing but did not foresee any issue with the Steering Group having access to the tendering evidence, invoices or contracts associated with the LIFE+ project as it is required by the EU and in the public domain. He confirmed that he would seek confirmation.</p> <p><u>Action 13 – Treatment of scrub clearance residual</u> – HK raised the issue of Rhododendron regrowth on Thorne Moors. She clarified that this was not related to works carried out by the LIFE+ project but earlier scrub clearance work. DPH confirmed that there would be a full Rhododendron spraying programme scheduled for the summer. TK kindly requested that if anyone saw Rhododendron regrowth to take a photo and send it to him and he would investigate.</p> <p><u>Action 14 – Facebook link to be sent to Steering Group members</u></p> <p><u>Action 15 – Funding for LIFE+ project website</u> – DPH confirmed that there is money in the budget for a LIFE+ project website but the issue was hosting the site as it could not be hosted by Natural England due to Civil Service rules. This is being picked up later in the agenda under project update.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> PD to seek confirmation on whether associated beneficiary contracts/invoices for the LIFE+ project can be viewed by the Steering Group members.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p><b>2. Key Milestones/Operational Activities – PD/DPH/TK</b></p> <p><b>EU Monitor's Report</b></p> <p>PD asked members if they had any questions in relation to the EU Monitor's report which had been received on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015, in response to the visit she made on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015. HK asked if there was confidence in the cooperation that the project would receive from the DE IDB in achieving the project targets and associated</p>	<p><b>Action 5:</b> PD would seek clarification from CB on whether there is sufficient to cover the LIFE+ project</p>



<p>spend. DPH commented that in relation to the DE IDB the monies attached to the Water Level Monitoring Plan had both a contingency fund in addition to the 10% savings that had been requested on the project as a whole. HK asked if the 10% was just attached to the project and where the contingency fund had originated. PD confirmed that the 10% savings were being applied by Defra through the EA on all spend. SW clarified that all projects had a contingency built on and it came from the original project funder. She confirmed that any monies that were not spent on specific works on the project would go back into the project for other, authorised works. DPH pointed out that it is good practice to build in a contingency as project costs can only be approximations e.g. the LIFE+ project recently tendered for Information boards and these had come back 50% cheaper than budgeted but some costs e.g. scrub clearance had come back more expensive. PD said that he would seek clarification from Craig Benson on the contingency fund for the WLMP. PD did confirm that the EA had emailed to confirm that the DE IDB could claim for any additional works undertaken, within the allocated budget. HK sought clarification on what the associated management fees would be for any additional works. PD stated that the fees were not within his control and out of the scope of the LIFE+ project. However, PD would seek clarification from CB on whether there is sufficient to cover the LIFE+ project match.</p> <p>HK asked if point g. - <u>DE IDB Invoices</u> - was resolved in relation to the status of the JBA contract. DPH confirmed that this is a matter for the EA, DE IDB and JBA to resolve as JBA are not submitting any invoices for their management fees, as these invoices are not eligible for the LIFE+ project.</p> <p>In relation to points made in the report under <u>NE Invoices</u>, DPH confirmed that he would provide an update on these in the mid-term report to the EU, planned for June 2016.</p> <p>DPH also reported, in relation to <u>NE Timesheets</u> and staff working on several LIFE+ projects that this was only applicable, at the moment, to regional or national staff e.g. communication, procurement leads.</p> <p><b>Project Performance Report - DPH</b></p> <p>DPH took members through the LIFE+ Project Performance Report for 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016, focusing, in the main, on the project actions displaying a 'red' or 'amber' rating.</p> <p><u>Action A1</u> – Project establishment. Although this is currently on 'green' DPH gave the steering group members an update on the Estate Worker team. Half of the estate workers (3) resigned in mid-December to take up full time employment elsewhere. A plan has been agreed</p>	<p>match.</p>
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which means that the two FTAs who are contracted to work on a seasonal 0.6 contract (August – March) would now be contracted from March 2016 to March 2017 on a full time contract. The one STA would work up to early August 2016 on a full time contract. Due to Civil Service Rules the current STA and possibly the three vacant estate workers roles will need to be advertised during the Summer. An evaluation of the scrub clearance will determine how much work is required during the winter 2016/17 session and whether the three vacant estate worker posts will need filling. DPH said that having the three estate workers available during the summer will now release the Assistant Project Managers, Ed Brightman and Mark Outhwaite, to carry out communication activities, such as community events, presentations and visits. DPH informed the Group that the EU Monitor is happy with the solution proposed and now in place.

Action A2 – Review of Thorne and Hatfield Moors Site Management Plan. DPH reported that this is currently at ‘amber’ and that a draft plan had now been produced which is out for evaluation. TK asked when the next report to the EU is due in terms of providing an update on the progress on the Management Plan. DPH confirmed that the mid-term report to the EU is due in June 2016. TK confirmed that the Management Plan is scheduled to be completed by June, with the local community having an opportunity to influence the Plan when it is consulted on at the ‘Planning for Real’ events.

Action A3 - Consents and Licences in place. DPH stated that although this is on ‘green’, with the felling licence and the Eels Regulations for the pumping station on Thorne Moors now in place. He informed the Group that he will be submitting the Eels Regulations exemption application form if required for the works on Hatfield Moors, but is awaiting a response from the Environment Agency. HK enquired as to who had undertaken the Eels Regulations Assessment for the pumping station. SW clarified that this had been carried out by an independent organisation, and went on to confirm that there is just one structure that needs work to comply with Eels Regulations. HK sought clarification on what structure still required work. SW said that she would provide the Group with the details.

Actions C1 and C2 – scrub clearance on Hatfield and Thorne Moors. DPH confirmed that this still remains on ‘amber’. The contractors have been working on Hatfield Moors and the works on Belton Moor were due for completion today. DPH informed the Group that the LIFE+ and NNR teams would check the works next week, prior to authorising invoice payments. This is the reason why spend on C1 is low. DPH informed the Group that there are currently four scrub clearance machines on Casson’s Gardens. He also clarified that spend in C2 includes the estate worker salaries. There was some discussion on the

**Action 6:** SW to inform the Group on what structure still requires work to comply with Eels Regulations.



track damage that was being caused on Thorne Moors. TK said that this would be looked at and addressed. HK expressed concern about the mild weather and the impact that this may have on the start of the bird season. TK reassured the Group that he was monitoring this on a daily/weekly basis.

DPH informed the Group that there had been damage to one of contractor's vehicles that had been left outside the shed on Thorne Moors. The vehicle had been set on fire and would require a low loader to move it off the site. TK informed the Group that this would be addressed and that having a burnt out vehicle was not a good impression to set the public. RM asked generally about the level of intrusion that the works on Thorne Moors was attracting. TK said that regrettably with a lot of contractor activity people would invariably start surveying the area for possible 'opportunities'. He informed members that JBA who were currently onsite have a security team in place. And that any incidents were being reported to the police and being logged by the NNR team to see patterns and where vigilance was required.

DPH assured members that he was optimistic that the scrub clearance target would be achieved. He clarified that with 16 tonne vehicles is being used at Hatfield and hopefully the areas that are wet now will be drier, hopefully, in the autumn so that these can be worked on. It is anticipated that the contractors on Thorne will have completed by the end of February but an extension till the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016 has been discussed with TK. SW sought clarification on how much more an extension might cost the project. DPH said that the contract had been calculated on a per hectare clearance rate and that were no penalties attached to not clearing the number of hectares as outlined in the contract. It was unlikely that a company would have taken on a contract with penalties given the difficulties of the site and the vagaries of the weather. However, if the hectares are not cleared then there will be a corresponding reduction in what the contractor can claim in their invoice. HK reiterated the issue of bird displacement due to the unprecedented weather. DPH said that this will be an action that he and TK would monitor on a daily basis as far as the scrub clearance is concerned, and it is planned that the contractors will start the winter 2016/17 season from the 1<sup>st</sup> September. HK informed members that in early September the nightjars will have their second brood, a point that was not recognised in the recent nightjar report. DPH said that mid-September to accommodate the 2<sup>nd</sup> broods could be accommodated.

Action C4 – Install weirs on arterial ditches on Hatfield Moors. This is currently on 'green' and TK gave an outline of the preparation that he and Bryan Wainwright have undertaken and where these works will take place. HK asked what the approach has been to assess where these weirs will go. TK said that LIDAR data has been used, along with

**Action 7:** TK and DPH to work with NNR, LIFE+ Project teams and contractors reference monitoring displacement of birds due to mild weather.



information on the original bund locations. He confirmed that assessment work also took place earlier this month and that in some places where the water levels were too high estimations had been made. He also clarified that the bigger structures, such as the titling weirs will be adjustable.

Action C6 – Construction of a pumping station on Thorne Moors. DPH informed the group that this is on ‘amber’ as the pumping station is currently out for tender with a closing date of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016. This may mean that the pumping station is not completed until approximately July 2016 instead of the original date of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016. DPH stated that the eligible spend from the DE IDB will dramatically leap over the coming months as these works near completion. HK asked about the possible impact of the construction works on the displacement of birds. TK commented by saying that it may have limited displacement and that the original plans had been passed by Natural England who had hoped that the works would be completed earlier.

Action D3 – Supply and installation of additional water loggers. DPH stated that this action is on ‘amber’ as they are behind schedule. The work to assess the water loggers is still under way and it looks as if the time cannot be made up. HK commented that these were crucial. TK said that this had been covered in the Monitoring and Science sub group earlier in the week, and that additional water loggers are being ordered and these will be in place by the end of March 2016.

DPH stated that the ecosystems questionnaire had been received from York University and that it was anticipated that it would be distributed at the same time as Moor Space – issue 4, due to go out April 2016. As the Memorandum of Understanding with York University is still not finalised this is the reason why this action is on ‘amber’. DPH also informed members that the ecosystems questionnaire will go before York University ‘ethics committee’ before it is released. HK asked if ‘survey monkey’ could be used as a mechanism to send and receive the ecosystems questionnaire. SW suggested that using online technologies, such as ‘Survey Monkey’ may result in a wider response. DPH confirmed that York University and the LIFE+ project team are looking at a range of media.

Action E1 – Engagement with the local community. DPH informed members that this remains on ‘red’ and ‘amber’. However, due to the change in the Estate Workers contracts the two Assistant Project Managers are dedicating some of their time to communication activities. DPH asked if members had any ideas for events. HK suggested a moth night or a red deer rut event.

**Action 8:** Steering group members to email DPH with any suggestions for events.



Action E2 – Networking with other projects. This action remains on ‘amber’. DPH explained that he has been in touch with a number of EU LIFE+ project managers but had little response, with those responding stating that they are under pressure to deliver their own projects. He did update the Group on a potential visit to Denmark. He has been in touch, via Peter Hahn project manager of the Danish Project at Lille Vildmose who is happy to host our visit. To coincide with our visit he will also host a meeting with other Danish peat bog restoration. He also stated that there is the potential to visit a project in central Scotland. HK suggested making contact with the Mire Group and the IPCC.

Action E4 - Project website and publications. DPH explained that the onsite information boards had been out for tender and a contract was being awarded this week. It is anticipated that the information boards will be in place at the end of March 2016. HK pleaded that the information boards contains accurate information. DPH said that he would consult with the Steering Group members on content.

Action F2 – Two vehicles and tracked chipper procured. DPH explained that although this action is ‘green’. As only two vehicles have been procured for the project, there is money available that could potentially be recycled elsewhere subject to EU approval e.g. to cover costs such as the website. However, this would need to be documented and justified in the mid-term report to the EU due in June 2016.

On a general note RM stated that he would like to make a visit to Thorne and Hatfield Moors to see the works that are currently taking place. DPH suggested that a joint meeting, followed by a site visit with the DE IDB and LIFE+ Steering Group had been tabled. PD and DPH agreed to work on possible dates for a joint meeting and site visit.

**Science and Monitoring Sub Group meeting – verbal update – TK**

In the absence of MB, TK circulated a paper to members which he stated had not been checked for any inaccuracies. TK confirmed that he was reporting on a summary of the main elements that Richard Smith (RS) had delivered at the Science and Monitoring sub group meeting that had been held earlier in the week. It was agreed that the report given by RS should be circulated to the Group. HK asked for clarification on water level monitoring. DPH clarified that 28 loggers had been installed and paid for by Natural England before the year the project had started, this reduced the expected requirement to 32 data loggers within this project period. HK picked up on the point of cultural engagement and asked about the level of academic data and input from Universities. She informed members that a paper had been put together by Roger Meade. TK said that he would look at the paper. HK

**Action 9:** DPH to ask Steering Group members for their comments on the accuracy of the information displayed on the onsite boards.

**Action 10:** PD and DPH to work on a date for a joint DE IDB and LIFE+ project meeting and site visit.

**Action 11:** AL to obtain the report from RS and circulate to the Group.

**Action 12:** TK to look at the paper produced by Roger Meade.

**Action 13:** Steering group



sought clarification on whether this was the first meeting of the sub group as she felt that there was an opportunity for other to be involved, particular in terms of those with a science background. PD stated that Bob Marsh, from DMBC had been invited but was unable to attend. MM suggested that as Bob Marsh is undertaking some of the LIFE+ project identification work then he may feel that he is already involved, and that there might be other people within DMBC that may wish to attend. TK asked members for their suggestions on others who they think may wish to attend the Science and Monitoring sub group meetings.

HK said that she was concerned that the sorting of the invertebrates had not been carried out immediately and that identification would take time if material had not been dispatched to specialist in a timely manner. A lot of entomologists were already working on planning the 2016 field season having worked through materiel in the winter months. HK explained that some groups like the Diptera needed plenty of time allocating to determine and report back, and that this was demonstrable with the Inkle Moor Invertebrate Survey undertaken in 2012. If commercial rates are being paid then contractual terms should accommodate a short turnaround of material.

DPH commented that two additional on foot counters had been purchased and that additional software had been purchased, the money for these had been agreed with the EU monitors from savings in the data logger budget.

**Website update – DPH**

DPH informed members that the project webpage complied with the project requirements but the EU deemed it inadequate. He updated the group on the efforts he has been making to secure a website host, including contacting JNCC. Unfortunately their website is also being moved to GOV.uk. DPH informed members that a host for the LIFE+ project would only be required on an interim basis for at least six months, until the Landscape Partnership project gets up and running, where the LIFE+ project could be hosted for the next six years. He also informed members that he had posed a question to the NE CEO, James Cross on the same subject. HK informed members that the Forum Executive would have been happy to have made a dedicated page on the Forum’s revamped website available to promote the LIFE+ Project. However, as a consequence of correspondence relating to copyright around the recently, well received Thorne Moors Compartment Maps (which also bears JBA logo) being received from DE IDB they could not enact the offer at this point in time which was unfortunate. HK also commented that people often contacted the Forum about Thorne and Hatfield Moors because that had a good ‘hit;

members to email TK with suggestions on other people that may wish to attend the Science and Monitoring sub group meetings.

**Action 14:** DPH to contact DMBC to see whether the Green Spaces Network would host, on an interim basis, the LIFE+ project webpages.



<p>rate through various search engines compared to NE and the Humberhead Levels Gov.uk option.</p> <p>SW suggested that there is a Community Interest Group based in Hexthorpe that may offer a solution but it may be out of the catchment area for the Moors. AL informed members of the Green Spaces Network, overseen by DMBC and suggested that this might offer an opportunity to host the LIFE+ Project. MM agreed that this would be worth looking in to. DPH said that he would get in contact with the relevant people at DMBC reference the potential to host.</p> <p><b>Mid-term workshop – DPH</b></p> <p>DPH informed the Group that a date and venue had been secured for the mid-term workshop. This will take place on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016 from 09:30-16:00 at Thorne Rugby Club, with site visits to Thorne Moors. HK asked if the public were to be invited but it was explained that the workshop is aimed at academics and practitioners, with a target number of up to 75 attendees. DPH agreed to send out a draft programme to the members for the thoughts and feedback. He welcomed their ideas on potential guest speaker for the morning session.</p>	<p><b>Action 15:</b> DPH to send out a draft workshop programme to steering group members for their comment and ideas on a guest speaker.</p>
<p><b>3. Any Other Business – PD</b></p> <p>PD asked members for any other items of business. DPH reminded members that Moor Space – Issue 3 is due out in February and Issue 4 which will be delivered to over 22,000 households will be distributed in April 2016.</p> <p>HK informed the Group that she had invited RS to present the findings from the nightjar work of 2015 but unfortunately he was unable to attend. However, Lucy Ryan had confirmed that she could present the findings. An actual date has yet to be confirmed but it is anticipated that it will take place in March/April 2016.</p> <p>PD asked members for their thoughts on the frequency of the Steering Group meetings and whether they felt that the Group should meet more often e.g. monthly or every other month. MM stated that the role of the Group is to steer and she felt involved enough to continue with quarterly meetings. She did suggest that were scrutiny was required for specific technical matters maybe other people could be involved. RM and HK suggested that smaller meetings with appropriate Steering Group members might be more efficient and this is when specific issues could be tackled. RM and HK stated that they were available, when required to offer help, if specific requests were made outside of the normal quarterly meetings, such as offering expertise in relation to science. PD asked whether a newsletter, similar to the one sent out by</p>	<p><b>Action 16:</b> DPH to write and distribute a newsletter update to Steering Group members between the quarterly meetings.</p> <p><b>Action 17:</b> DPH to offer an invitation to the EU Monitor to future Steering</p>



<p>DPH prior to the Christmas break was useful in terms of keeping members informed between Steering Group meetings. Members felt that this would be a good idea, as long as it did not result in too much additional work for the LIFE+ Project Manager. Members asked about the feasibility of the EU Monitor attending one of the Steering Group meetings. DPH said that he would offer an invitation to the EU Monitor to attend future Steering Group meetings.</p> <p>PD ended the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions.</p>	<p>Group meetings.</p>
<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Group will take place at the Humberhead Peatlands office on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 from 10.30 – 12.30.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 12.50</p>	