



Friday 26th June 2015, 10.30-12.10pm, Humberhead Peatlands, Natural England, Unit 1a, Green Tree Warehousing, Tudworth Road, Hatfield, DN7 6HD

Attendees: Paul Duncan (PD), Helen Kirk (HK), David Hinchliffe (DNH), Julian Small (JS), Matt Blissett (MB), Melissa Masserella (MM), Roger Mitchell (RM)

Apologies: Caroline Steel (CS), James Freeborough (JF), Tim Allen (TA)

Visitors: John Dunbavin (JD) – Cumbria Bogs LIFE+ Project Manager, Nicole Stoppani (NS) – DMBC Work Placement

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

Discussions/Key Points		For Action By	
<p>1. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising - PD</p> <p>PD welcomed new members and visitors to the Steering Group meeting. Brief introductions were given by all attendees.</p> <p>PD went on to inform the members that the last meeting of the Steering Group, held on Friday 23rd March, had not been quorate and consequently no decisions had been made at the meeting.</p> <p>AJL to amend the minutes of the 23rd March to reflect that RM had given his apologies.</p> <p>PD went through the actions from the previous meeting with the Steering Group.</p>			
No.	Action description	Status	Covered under Agenda Item no.
1	Funding for mid-point audit of LIFE+ project. The audit will be covered under Natural England audit processes. This will not incur any additional costs for the LIFE+ project	Completed	N/A
2	Progress Felling Licence.	Ongoing	2
3	Develop Communication Strategy.	Completed	2
4	Sign-off of the ToRs by DMBC.	Completed	N/A



5	Contact Craig Benson, JBA Consulting, regarding timesheet documentation. Timesheets not required as they are associated beneficiaries and only need to present their invoices.	Completed	N/A
6	Produce a report on project milestones and spend. Included in the Inception Report and sent out to LIFE+ project Steering Group members.	Completed	2
7	Check with Craig Benson that letters have gone out to TM WLMP Steering Group members' reference membership and meeting schedule.	Completed	N/A
8	Produce a scrub clearance plan to catch up with outstanding works, for consideration by Steering Group.	Completed	2
9	Produce a plan to identify the monthly outputs that will be achieved by the Hydrological works for consideration by the Steering Group.	Ongoing	AOB
10	Discuss progress on pumping station with JBA.	Ongoing	AOB
11	Send a copy of the EU financial Guidance information to Jeff Bloor, as requested by him at the final meeting he attended.	Completed	N/A
12	SP to convene a meeting in April to bring together the interested parties from the Landscape partnership, Humberhead Peatlands LIFE+ project and the Cumbrian Bogs Life+ project to work on a joint communication plan for engaging with communities.	Completed	N/A
13	Produce a project performance report.	Completed	2
14	Invite the Project Manager for the Cumbrian Bogs Life+ project to the next meeting of the Steering Group.	Completed	N/A
<p>Introduction to the Cumbria Bogs LIFE+ project - JD</p> <p>PD welcomed John Dunbavin, Project Manager for the Cumbria LIFE+ project to the meeting. JD was invited to provide the Group with an introduction to the Cumbria LIFE+ project. JD outlined the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 5 year, £5 million project – working across three different sites to restore lowland raised bog at Bolton Fell Moss, South Solway 			



Mosses and Roudsea Wood and Mosses

- JD explained each site - Roudsea Wood and Mosses NNR/ Special Area of Conservation (SAC) has a low water table caused by past domestic peat cuttings, drainage and Rhododendron infestation. Wedholme Flow is part of the South Solway NNR/SAC and parts were commercially milled as recently as 2005 and Bolton Fell Moss, the biggest site at 420ha, is soon to be designated a SAC and was also recently commercially cut.
- The partners on the project are Natural England and Defra who are providing £2.1 million funding.
- The project started in August 1st 2014, with the LIFE+ project team in place from the 1st January 2015.
- There are four members of staff, including Project Manager, John Dunbavin, Monitoring and Science Officer, Sarah McCormack, Communications Officer, Tania Crockett and Support Officer, Sarah Fell. They work closely with the Senior Reserve Manager, Alasdair Brock.

JD explained that practical works started from the 1st August 2014 with:

- Roudsea Wood and Mosses 29.1 hectares of trees and rhododendron have been removed – using excavation and Flail. Photos recently taken clearly illustrate the effect the work has had on the land.
- Bunding to raise water levels has also occurred on 23 hectares of bog.
- Work on Solway Mosses will not commence until year 3 – this will include rewetting works and sphagnum, along with water level manipulation.
- Bolton Fell Mosses – approximately 500 hectares has no vegetation and work will start in August/September – this scale of work has not been carried out before in terms of re-introducing bog vegetation and sphagnum and forms and an interesting part of the project.

JD explained that the current challenge is in relation to funding.



<p>DEFRA had failed to put the funding aside for the project. However, some monies were secured to get the project started. There are reassurances coming from DEFRA that the monies will be available. However, NE has put the Cumbria LIFE+ project on the risk register and JD has been working on a contingency plan should all or part of the funding not be secured.</p> <p>JD also said that time had been taken to establish a strong governance foundation and process. The Cumbrian LIFE+ project has a Steering Group and a Project Board.</p> <p>In terms of the other project deliverables for the Cumbrian LIFE+ project - fixed point photographs have been taken, project notice boards are underway and community engagement activities are being planned. As Bolton Fell Mosses has recently gone through a Compulsory Purchase Order and SSSI designation community engagement will take place later in the project. The Solway Mosses is where community engagement is currently focused.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress update (key milestones/operational activities) - DPH <p>Project Performance Report</p> <p>DPH tabled the Project Performance Report which had been sent out to the Group. He took members through the report focusing on the project actions displaying a 'red' or 'amber' rating.</p> <p><u>Action A3</u> – consents and licences in place. Felling licence is currently at amber, DPH to return to this under the felling licence agenda item.</p> <p><u>Action C1 and C2</u> – scrub clearance. This is currently at amber. DPH informed members that a contingency plan was in place to achieve the outstanding scrub clearance by March 2016. If necessary there is another felling season and the project could be extended but this has implications for the budget as there will be no further funding.</p> <p>Members asked how the majority of scrub will be cleared, e.g. Estate Workers or Contractors. DPH clarified that the vast amount of scrub will be cleared by contractors and that the details would be picked up under the item relating to the felling licence.</p> <p>DPH commented that the HHP LIFE+ project could potentially be in</p>	



competition with the Cumbria LIFE+ project for suitable contractors. And went onto explain that a 'Framework' contract has been established by the Cumbria LIFE+ project which can be used by HHP, plus other partners to issue tenders and secure suitable contractors.

DPH informed the Group that tenders will be going out for contracting on the scrub clearance work. It is anticipated that the LIFE+ project Estate workers will clear 20% of the 'difficult to deal with' and the remaining will be cleared by contractors.

The Group sought clarification on the working times/hours the LIFE+ project Estate Workers, particularly in terms of efficiency and productivity, when working on the site during reduced day light hours.

Action C6 – DPH informed members that he is still awaiting information on the Pumping Station. JS/PD gave an overview of the design information that they had been given verbally but they have not seen any designs.

Action E1- The 'Planning for Real' events are behind target but events have been booked in Thorne and Hatfield, and an event in Hatfield Woodhouse is currently being sourced. It is anticipated that this action will be achieved by the end of September.

Action E2 - DPH explained that the action to attend scientific events had not been achieved as the focus had been placed on other priorities. However, it is anticipated that this will be addressed later in the year.

Action E4 – The project newsletter 'Moor Space' and the collapsible LIFE+ project banners are on amber but are on target to be in place by the end of June. DPH gave details about the Natural England internal spending review panel that needs to 'approve' all communication spend, whether the project is internally or externally funded. He explained that he had gained approval from the Panel for all LIFE+ communication spend for the rest of the year, hopefully helping to alleviate any further delays to this action.

Action F2 – A tender has been issued for the purchase of a chipper as the chipper in the past had been on hire.

Steering Group members asked further questions relating to the Project Performance Report, including:

- How any residual from the scrub clearance will be dealt with? It was suggested that this would be site specific. For example, it could be used to fill in ditches or used to cover paths, or taken

Action 1: JS to look at Estate Workers working patterns and establish where efficiencies could be made and productivity increased.

Action 2: PD to check with JBA on the designs for the pumping station, including timescales.



<p>off site for wood chipping – Biomass fuel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relationship with JBA, in terms of the level of co-ordination that takes place around works on scrub clearance and hydrology, DPH reported is good. He went on to say that regular meetings are being held between key contacts on the HHP and JBA. Finances – DPH explained that he was still getting to grips with the Natural England finance systems but there is no cause for concern. He went onto confirm that he has a meeting with Alison Briggs from JBA on finance to ensure that communications are clear, particularly in terms of roles, responsibilities. <p>DPH commented that the nightjar tagging was going well and that one of the nightjars tagged had been re-caught proving that the process is working.</p>	
<p>Communication & Implementation Plan</p> <p>DPH explained that the colleagues on both LIFE+ project – HHP and Cumbria were working closely on the communication actions and thanked Tania Crockett, Cumbria Communications Officer for her steer and input. DPH went on to take the Group through the Communication Plan, explaining that the actions that needed to be delivered through the Plan were critical in terms of engaging the local community, land owners and scientific community. He asked if members would consider as outlined in Annex 2 of the Communications Plan, the stakeholders that we would need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep Satisfied Manage Closely Monitor Keep informed <p>And to email him with their suggestions on who these might be.</p> <p>DPH explained that at previous Steering Group meetings there had been discussions on sharing a web site through the Humberhead Levels Partnership web platform but funded through the LIFE+ project. However, having looked closely at the LIFE+ project there is no funding allocated for a website. As the LIFE+ project specifies a web presence DPH asked members, if in addition to GOV.uk web page, they would support a HHP/LIFE+ project Facebook page. He tabled a paper that had been emailed to the Steering Group members outlining how this</p>	<p>Action 3: Steering Group members to email DPH with suggestions on stakeholders to engage and influence.</p> <p>Action 4: AJL and Tania Crockett, Cumbria Life+ project Communications Officer to progress jointly establishing LIFE+ project Facebook pages.</p>



<p>might work, confirming that apart from staff time it would not cost any money to set up and maintain. The Steering Group agreed that they would support the continuation of GOV.uk as a web presence but use Facebook as the glossy front end for the project. It was also agreed that the Cumbria and HHP LIFE+ projects would work together to secure Facebook pages for both projects.</p> <p>DPH went onto draw members' attention to the Moor Space newsletter – a joint newsletter with partners from across the Humberhead Peatlands. He asked members if they would support the newsletter going to every household in Crowle, Hatfield and Thorne. The Steering Group agreed with this proposal but suggested that it should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to Isle of Axholme parishes and Swinefleet • Two newsletters should be distributed to households and the next edition in late summer should feature a calendar of events, images and a feature on the Casson's Gardens – to be picked up in felling licence agenda item. <p>RM asked what opportunities were being explored to engage with local schools. DPH explained that the LIFE+ project has a commitment to work with schools and that Janet Canning, Reserve Manager was leading on this work.</p>	
<p>Monitoring and science plan</p> <p>DPH tabled the monitoring and science plans developed by Richard Smith, LIFE+ project Science and monitoring Officer. The plans were welcomed by members but there were a number of questions relating to the lack of costings, and particularly where value added would be found. Members stressed it was a massive task in terms of carrying out invertebrate monitoring and they welcomed clarity on the details and finances. PD suggested establishing a Science and Monitoring sub group which could look in more detail at the costings and where added value could be found and funded. PD asked who would wish to be a member and it was confirmed that Julian Small, Richard Smith and David Hargreaves would join the group, and it was suggested to invite Bob Marsh from DMBC. Helen Kirk said she would ask Executive colleagues if they were able to or were interested in being involved, being mindful of their current priorities and commitments.</p>	<p>Action 5: JS to work with RS to establish a meeting date in July for the Science and Monitoring sub group.</p>
<p>Felling Proposal</p> <p>DPH updated members on progress towards the felling licence. JS and DPH met with the Chris Grice and Iwan Downey from the Forestry Commission on Tuesday 23rd June. The outcome of the meeting was that with some amendments the works are unlikely to be classed as</p>	



Deforestation and therefore fall within the EIA Regulations.

The definition for Deforestation is reducing the canopy potential to less than 20% and this relates to individual compartments. It would be possible to reduce current canopy to less than 20% as long as the potential was there for greater than 20% cover. With the re-vegetation of some of the bare peat this area is now potential forestry cover whilst open water would be outside the scope and considered ineligible for inclusion into the 20% potential cover calculations.

Following the meeting with the Forestry Commission the Opinion documentation has been amended and resubmitted. The felling compartments have also been simplified. The Commission now has 28 days to respond on whether an EIA will be required. Dependent on the outcome DPH will submit a felling licence.

DPH assured members that the delay in getting the licence would not impact on the project as there were enough Rhododendrons to keep the contractors and Estate Workers busy for many months. He confirmed that focus was on getting the licence in place by September 2015.

Some of the Steering Group members expressed a concern on what the felling works might have on the Deer population. It was felt that this should be monitored closely to establish whether there were any noticeable changes to the Deer population, particularly as Deer are sensitive to change. It was suggested that a Red Deer might be tagged. JS also commented that the changes could also impact on the Mire Pill Beetle.

Casson's Garden

DPH explained to the Steering Group that Martin Limbert, via the Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum, had expressed concerns about the scrub clearance works on Casson's Garden, particular its impact on Rhododendron. Members explained how Martin has done a good deal of work on Rhododendron species.

The Steering Group was asked for their thoughts on how to treat these species, if found. The suggestions tabled were:

- Could the species be found a new home;
- Natural England to capture the interest of the site in text and photographs as an historical reference.
- Identify a controlled area and sign it to William Casson recognising its importance as part of the history of Thorne

Action 6: JS to work with Assistant Project Managers to work on a plan for recording where works are taking place and where sightings are made.



<p>Moors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record any earth works, with Botanical remnants identified and evaluated as to its importance. And make a decision on whether it needs to be put into a national Rhododendron Rhody collection. <p>There was a general comment that it is difficult to get into the area and any species might be destroyed in the scrub clearance works. It was agreed that the LIFE+ Assistant project managers should carry out work to look for them and retain them.</p> <p>The Steering Group felt that due to the historical significance of Casson's Gardens, particularly with the local community, that the next edition of the Moor Space newsletter should be dedicated to it. Martin Limbert should be approached to write an article for the newsletter.</p>	<p>Action 7: LIFE+ Assistant Project Managers to look for and retain any species. If none found then to clear out the rest of the invasive plants.</p> <p>Action 8: Janet Canning to focus next Moor Space newsletter on Casson's Gardens. DPH to approach Martin Limbert and invite him to write an article for the newsletter.</p>
<p>Any Other Business – PD</p> <p>PD invited members to table 'any other business', as follows:</p> <p>JD informed members that he had attended a Natura stakeholder/community engagement event in Bristol. He explained that Natura and EU LIFE+ unit are keen to get both projects involved in Natura Events, from the Natura 2000 angle.</p> <p>He also stressed that the EU will want to see both projects sharing knowledge and support in terms of the science and monitoring and community engagement events e.g. mid-point workshops and conferences.</p> <p>AJL explained that an internal Task and Finish Group had worked on a proposal for a HHP Apprenticeship Scheme which had received approval and funding internally from NE. The next step was to select and interview suitable candidates over the coming month for a start date in September 2015. Members were invited to take part in the next stage of the process.</p> <p>HK informed members that she had asked DE IDB a series of questions in relation to WLMP, in relation to an update on progress, TORs and the Steering Group interest of declaration. She was concerned that despite assurances that this information would be available on their website it had failed to appear.</p> <p>HK was also concerned that the budget sheet for DE IDB had not been</p>	<p>Action 9: Steering Group members to email AJL if they would like to take part in the next stage of the apprentice selection and recruitment.</p> <p>Action 10: PD to check with Jason that this information has gone online.</p> <p>Action 11: PD to contact</p>



<p>seen, and in light of the short term suspension stressed it was important for the security of the LIFE+ project that the budget sheet is viewed.</p> <p>RM said that he would see where things lay with the DE IDB and what role he was to play in terms of the LIFE+ Steering Group.</p> <p>PD reported that the LIFE+ Steering Group still required one more representative from DE IDB.</p> <p>Members commented that they require sight of DE IDB finance documentation and where interest on any monies would be going. RM explained his role on the DE IDB board e.g. Environmental brief – specifically on Potteric Carr. He said that he will find out what is happening.</p> <p>Members asked for an update on the NIA and if any reports on the tangible outcomes from the project had been published. JS said that he had a report from the RSPB outlining the potential for Biomass harvesting on the Moors. The Steering Group asked for a progress update on the Landscape Partnership Progress.</p> <p>PD asked members who might wish to be involved in a Communications sub group.</p>	<p>DE IDB to see budget sheet.</p> <p>Action 12: PD to ask DE IDB for a representative, specifically the Chair of the Finance Committee, Peter Horne.</p> <p>Action 13: PD to contact Tim Graham reference reports from the NIA.</p> <p>Action 14: JS to forward the Biomass report to circulate to Steering Group members</p> <p>Action 15: PD to ask SP for an update to forward to Steering Group.</p> <p>Action 16: Steering Group members to email DPH and AJL if interested in being part of a Communications sub group.</p>
<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Steering Group members agreed to meeting quarterly. The next meeting of the Group will take place at the HHP on 25th September 2015 from 10.30 – 12.30.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 13.00.</p>	

