

DEVON AVON WATER QUALITY GROUP
Notes of meeting at Follaton House, Totnes
Tuesday 25th June 2013

Attendance:	Representing
Stuart Watts – Chair (SW)	Aune Conservation Association (ACA)
Peter Marsh (PM)	ACA
John Peters (JP)	ACA and South Devon AONB
Glenis Pewsey (GP)	South West Water – Resources Strategist
John Roberts (JR)	Avon Fishing Association (AFA)
Robin Toogood (RT)	South Devon AONB Manager
Bruce Stockley (BS)	Head of Fisheries WRT
Chris Klee (CK)	Formerly of SW Fisheries Advisory Committee
Nia Snowden (NS) - Minutes	Environment Agency (EA) Environment Planning Officer
Emma-Rose Herrera (ERH)	Environment Agency (EA) Catchment Coordinator – South Devon
Mike Blackmore	Wild Trout Trust
Apologies	
Neil Osborne (NO)	Environment Agency – Principal Environment Planning Officer, WR
Kelvin Broad (KB)	Environment Agency - Fisheries Technical Specialist
Tracy White (TW)	Environment Agency - Environment Planning Specialist
Karensa Lawrie (KL)	WRT – SHRImp Project Officer
Mike Maslin (MM)	Environment Agency - Environment Officer
Roger Furniss	South West Rivers Association

Agenda Item	Description	Action
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence.	
2 & 3	<p>Notes of meeting of 5th February and matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes were agreed as read • Matters arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gravel augmentation - WRT in touch with Plymouth University. Study from Hydrologic available shortly and will inform WRT and the group on where gravel augmentation should be located. Action: WRT to contact David Sear to give presentation to the group on gravel augmentation ○ Peter Beale's PhD Thesis – does not cover the Avon so will not be pursued ○ WRT Pilot - Acid pH on the Dart. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UCL acidification study - optimistic recovery by 2020 to a level where 'waterbodies' are no longer classified as acidified. WRT are working with UCL to understand timescales for a slower recovery. ▪ WRT have proposed to lime a tributary of the Dart to demonstrate that pH levels are linked to fish populations. WRT will use biological and chemical monitoring to evaluate impact of the 	BS/KL

	<p>trial. A stakeholder group and monitoring sub-committee have been established to agree a suitable site with good historic monitoring. WRT are investigating sites to propose to the monitoring committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concern over the potential for fugitive emissions of aluminium used by the Water – GP email confirms that SWW are following the correct procedures ○ PM suggested that the Salmon trap at Venn Weir would give an indication of Salmon moving through if operated in November/December <p>Action: NS/ERH to speak to Rob Torr to establish legality of fish trap and any permits required for its operation</p>	NS/ERH
4	<p>Minimising obstacles to fish movement – WRT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curtisknowle Weir <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hydropower plans meant that the stone weir would remain with a fish pass installed centrally, however, concrete blocks were installed – work on this was stopped. WRT and AFA objected to an application for a new impoundment licence ○ JR said that flood water has scoured out some of the true right bank; there is concern that the new fish pass would be affected by movement of the weir which is unstable. CK and BS said that the fish pass has its own foundations and would not be undermined ○ JR reported that the hydromorphology of the river upstream of the weir has changed – Environmental Impact Assessments have been commissioned to understand the impact of the weir upstream. ○ Action: ERH to speak to Jay Rowntree regarding updates on the objection letter sent to the EA from the AFA ○ Action: JR to update the group on the matter at the next meeting • Brent Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Currently in disrepair due to high flows and is becoming an obstacle to salmonids and eels. Brent Island Trust own the weir and want to raise funds to help with the weir restoration ○ WRT have been working on designs to restore the bottom of the weir, and improvements to the top part of the fish pass have been proposed ○ Action: WRT to update the group on progress with designs and proposals • Loddiswell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WRT looking into small improvements to make the barrier more passable ○ Action: WRT to update on progress with Loddiswell improvements at the next meeting 	ERH JR BS/KL BS/KL
5	<p>Fish/River Monitoring Programme – WRT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRT Data Loggers – 6 loggers have been installed with 5 more to be installed. As of 25/06/2013 two weeks' worth of data have been collected. • WRT have an electro-fishing programme and are working to consolidate EA electro-fishing data • WRT Nutrient Budget Modelling work will measure the impacts and analyse the effects of nutrients on a river system. This is a 	

	<p>probabilistic system which indicates the probability of an impact. WRT are working with stakeholders to capture their input into the model. Six stakeholder groups are taking place in the South Hams to create the model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: WRT to update group on progress and early findings at the next meeting 	BS/KL
6	<p>Water Releases from Avon Dam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrology Study (Hydrologic) – looking at what would be a natural flow and how a fisheries bank release would impact downstream. • Action: BS to provide the report to GP and KB/ERH before it is signed off – GP is interested in sizes and times of potential releases. KB may need to comment on the report to obtain EA agreement • Action: EA to meet internally with all staff involved to work out how the EA manages the process of water releases and develop ideas • Action: EA and SWW to meet following EA internal meeting discuss ideas and discuss process and resilience 	BS ERH/NS ERH/NS
7	<p>Illegal Netting & Estuary Byelaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal Netting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EA will publicise successful prosecutions to increase deterrent ○ Action: EA to work with IFCA to coordinate on joint operations and to give update on the priority of the work the DAG are asking the two organisations to do – where does the intelligence go? ○ Action: Reporting illegal netting incidents – NS to confirm who ACA/AFA need to report incidents to within the EA 	ERH NS
8	<p>Invasive Weeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CRF SHRIMP Project don't cover these two invasive species ○ NS and ERH explained the "Plant Tracker" smartphone apps which can be used to "geotag" and identify areas where invasives are present. Data sent is collected through the app and will be reviewed by the national team. ○ Check Clean Dry – ERH explained there is a campaign which advises on how to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species ○ Action: ERH to circulate the Check Clean Dry campaign information 	ERH
9	<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Devon Avon Group was recognised as a successful group; similar groups have been set up on the Erme and the Yealm to tackle issues on these rivers. • ERH updated the group on Defra's Catchment Based Approach; following pilot catchments Defra are now endorsing this approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defra to release ~£1.6m nationally and is asking organisations to bid for funding to host catchment partnerships ○ Defra is keen for 3rd parties to run these catchment partnerships ○ Organisations have to apply for funding; bids must show that they have established a group of key 	

	<p>partners and have worked to get these partners on board. Evidence is crucial to a successful bid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action: ERH/NS to circulate policy documents and further information regarding collecting evidence for the catchment based approach to the group 	NS/ERH
10	<p>Next Meeting TBC</p>	