

DEVON AVON WATER QUALITY GROUP
Notes of meeting at Follaton House, Totnes
Tuesday 28th February 2012

Attendance:	Representing
Stuart Watts – Chair (SW)	Aune Conservation Association (ACA)
Peter Marsh (PM)	ACA
Michael Cooper (MC)	Avon Fishing Association (AFA)
John Peters (JP)	ACA and South Devon AONB
Nigel Mortimer	Estuaries Officer - SDAONB
Roger Furniss (RF)	South West Rivers Association
Glenis Pewsey (GP)	South West Water
Martin Ross (MR)	South West Water Environment Manager
Robin Toogood (RToo)	South Devon AONB Manager
Robert Torr (RTor)	Environment Agency (EA) - Communications Officer
Tracy Reeve (TR)	Environment Agency - Senior Environment Planning Officer
Neil Osborne (NO)	Environment Agency – Principal Environment Planning Officer, Water Resources
Kelvin Broad (KB)	Environment Agency - Fisheries Technical Specialist
John Roberts (JR)	AFA
Andy Thomas (AT)	Wild Trout Trust
Dylan Bright	WRT – apologies for absence

Item	Description	Action to
1	Welcome and introductions round the table	
2	<p>Catchment Based Approach</p> <p>RToo described the many plans and projects already going on, run by different organisations, in the wider Avon Catchment. A proposal was tabled for SDAONB to facilitate a more joined-up catchment based approach bringing all these organisations together. This might include the Yealm, Erme, Avon, Dart and Slapton Ley.</p> <p>TR gave an overview of what the EA is doing in respect of wider catchment planning for the next WFD cycle. The South Devon Management Unit would include all the above catchments (see Appendix and map at end of this document). As with the WIPs (Waterbody Improvement Plans), the EA will present the evidence and look at ways of delivering measures to achieve GES. Delivery of some measures by partner organisations is integral to the success of this approach.</p> <p>The consensus was that this group would do well to focus on the immediate remit in the Devon Avon WIP of improving habitat quality for fish.</p>	<p>RToo to meet with Ben Bunting and Dave Trewolla from the EA to progress.</p>
3 & 4	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fish Surveys – ideal levels of monitoring were discussed and KB highlighted the constraints on the EA monitoring programme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action for RF to contact WRT re their CRF bid to include increased monitoring. ➤ Venn Weir – consensus that the weir is in good condition but the fish pass can become blocked by debris delaying fish 	<p>RF</p>

	<p>migration which is a problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action to report blockages to EA or LA as appropriate. ACA to discuss with John Newsome (erstwhile weir owner and current ACA member). ▪ Action to construct a list of all weirs and fish passes in the catchment and put in place a programme of inspection of their condition. RF to discuss with WRT (also see 8, below). ▪ Action to EA to confirm who currently owns Venn Weir (thought by ACA to be the EA) 	<p>PM</p> <p>RF</p> <p>KB</p>
5	<p>Classification of the HMWB Results of the review to be published end of March 2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action to EA to clarify status 	TR
6	<p>Catchment Restoration Fund Bid SW to circulate documents received from WRT GP raised an issue that the release of water from different depths (and implied different chemical characteristics) from Avon Dam may not be realistic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action – any comments to be made to DB at WRT asap. 	<p>SW</p> <p>All</p>
7.1	<p>Catchment Walkover Comments from AT – Avon Dam impacts habitat by acting as a massive silt trap, preventing the natural movement of gravels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity for gravel augmentation with accompanying study of stability (how long will the gravel last as a spawning medium and how often would it need replacing?) Action to discuss with WRT. 	RF
7.2	<p>Fisher Water Bank releases from the dam (NO/GP) Consensus was that the AFA could be best placed to identify optimum flow conditions and advise the EA who would then contact SWW to make a release. Action for trial in 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trial for this year's Smolt run considered important ▪ Water likely to need banking for 3-4 weeks ▪ GP/NO to continue to liaise 	<p>MC/JR</p> <p>NO/GP</p>
8	<p>Obstacles to fish movement Covered under the minutes of the last meeting. KB advised that there is a National GIS layer of all weirs held by the EA. SW asked if the EA could make available a full list of Weirs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KB to action. 	KB
9	<p>Partnership Agreement EA and SWW expressed some reservations about formalising a partnership agreement. It was agreed that the group would continue to meet informally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action to pursue the possibility of a MoU or Steering Group. 	<p>All</p> <p>SW</p>
10	<p>Discussion/AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ NM raised the issue of Fish Farms ➢ NM asked where responsibilities lie off the coast. Answer: For sea fish – IFCA For Salmonids to six miles – EA ➢ Proposal to hold a multi-organisation event to formulate a “wish list” of activities and projects to help deliver measures and discuss best practice. To be given further thought of where, when, who would attend? 	All
11	<p>Next Meeting 30th May 10.30 Follaton House</p>	RToo/SW to arrange room

Appendix: Overview of proposed EA Catchment Planning programme.

South Devon Management Unit

Waterbody Information Packs (WIPs) and associated Action Plans were introduced by the Environment Planning Team to look at priority waterbodies that were scheduled for delivery by 2015 in the first River Basin Management Plan. They have provided a basis for identifying measures to deliver Good Ecological Status in our target waterbodies.

In light of our experience with this way of working and in accordance with guidance from DEFRA and the Environment Agency, it has been decided that we should look at improvements for Waterframework Directive in the next cycle on a catchment wide scale with particular reference to working in partnership with other organizations where this can help deliver the required outcomes.

To this end we have mapped the six management units in Devon and Cornwall from the first River Basin Management Plan. The South Devon Management Unit is shown in the map following this text.

Within each management unit there have been identified a number a catchments. These may comprise a single hydrological river catchment, a group of smaller river catchments or a significant tributary of a larger river.

Initially we have focussed on the river waterbodies but it is proposed to add sections for lakes, transitional, coastal and groundwater bodies in the near future. These documents must remain "living" through continuous updates.

We need the scope of being able to view the whole management unit or be able to split it in different ways to facilitate effective partnership working. This may be by the identified catchments or by political boundaries or any other means that suits the purpose.

Similarly to the Waterbody Information Packs (WIPs) from the first cycle, we will produce Catchment Information Packs (CIPs) that will set out the evidence that the Environment Agency holds. These documents will link to a larger document for the whole management unit. The CIP will include information for all waterbodies in the catchment including those covered by existing WIP documents.

The CIP will be headlined by a Desk Study which provides an insight into the evidence held by the Environment Agency from all data sources. It is proposed to better integrate data for Water Resources and Flood Risk Management.

In this cycle we should be significantly better informed since all the investigations identified in the first River Basin Management Plan should have been completed by the end of 2012.

This will be followed by a consultation period for Officers from different teams to see the desk study and collate local and anecdotal information. In addition, in most catchments, the draft document with the associated evidence (where appropriate and in accordance with data protection) should be put out to public consultation.

The next step is for a meeting to take place, coordinated and facilitated by the Area Environment Planning Officer, to identify actions to increase our understanding and more importantly measures to deliver Good Ecological Status (GES). The meeting should include representatives from other organizations that are already active in the catchment or who are likely to become so

