

# SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

## Steering Group Meeting

2pm Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003 Monmouthshire County  
Council, Cwmbran

## MINUTES

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### **Attendees:**

George Ashworth (chairman), Monmouthshire County Council  
Charlotte Street, Project Officer  
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University  
Anne Valdes, Newport City Council  
Helen Jenkins, Environment Agency  
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council  
Steve Knowles, ASERA

### **1. Apologies for absence**

John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Peter Gilbert, Stroud District Council  
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire County Council  
Jessica Poole, CCW  
Rick Turner, Cadw  
Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean District Council  
Cllr. Charles Price, Bristol City Council  
Andy Hicklin, Environment Agency  
Colette Bosley, Monmouthshire County Council

### **2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2003 were accepted as a true record. GA commented that most of the matters arising would be taken under the agenda.

RB updated the group on item 7 ii, the Cork Proposal saying that a letter in support of this project had been sent from the SEP. CS commented that it was decided rather than the SEP be a full partner, which wouldn't have been possible at this stage with the Interreg project looming, the SEP will become involved through the involvement of Cardiff University with the project. RB added that the project has received great interest from the relevant departments and is likely to be taken forward in the next 6 months.

RB commented on item 9, the ICZM Stocktake, reporting that Atkins are currently putting together lists of Best Practice that have come out of the Stocktaking exercise. RB is editing this work from the Welsh perspective. The SEP were referred as good practice under the headings of 'Adopting a Broad Holistic Perspective' and 'Involving All Stakeholders'.

GA commented that this was a real achievement however he noted that neither category referred to our current work i.e. implementation and action. RB took note of this comment.

**ACTION: CS to circulate RB/Atkins report to partners**

**CS to include UK recognition/achievement of the SEP in the JAC invitation to be circulated in February.**

### **3. Progress Report**

CS talked through the progress report she had prepared updating the group on achievements over the last couple of months. These included progress with the Interreg project, Administrative tasks, Communication Projects and reported on external conferences and meetings attended.

### **4. SEP Finances**

CS presented to the group a spreadsheet detailing the SEP finances. The current balance stands at £81000, however there are several outstanding payments to cover Les Esturiales subs, travel to attend Interreg Meeting and transfers to the Interreg account. Following these payments the end of year balance will stand at £53,232.

CS commented that with the commencement of the Interreg project and new staff she had been looking into another PC for the team, possibly a laptop. GEK advised that a laptop in a docking station would be an asset however it is like to be more expensive.

**ACTION: CS to investigate and price a third PC for the SEP team.**

### **5. Interreg Project**

#### **i. Kick-Off Meeting**

CS and GEK reported to the group the outcomes of the Interreg Meeting held the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November in Asturias, Spain. Following 2 days of hard work, negotiations and presentations, they felt quite confident that the project content in all partner regions hung together very well. Due to the changes made in the project management team in Asturias, a lot of time and effort went in to ensuring

that a management structure for the project was adopted that was acceptable to all.

## ii. Staffing and Working Arrangements

CS reported how it was envisaged that each of the project strands would be staffed. She would be managing the Stakeholder strand and adopting a co-ordination role.

An Access Officer had been provisionally appointed to run the Access Strand. Their contract will be issued on receipt of the Grant Offer Letter from the lead partner which has been promised by Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

The Cultural Heritage strand will be seconded to Richard Osgood in South Gloucestershire Council.

The Natural Heritage and GIS Strands have been offered to Steve Knowles. Steve has expressed his interest in this offer. This could run alongside the finalisation of the ASERA Management Scheme.

This leaves the Urban Rural Strand which either could be seconded to a South Gloucestershire Council or a sealed tender bidding process carried out to let a contract. RB commented that this is something the City Regional Planning Department, Cardiff University, may be interested in.

**ACTION: CS to ensure Access Officer contract goes through.**

**CS to discuss with Personnel the secondment of Richard Osgood.**

**CS to discuss the potential employment of Steve Knowles and related contracts with Personnel.**

**CS/GEK to look at the position with the Urban/Rural Strand.**

## iii. Press Release

CS tabled a Press Release that she had prepared back in the summer. On receipt of the grant offer letter we would be in a position to release it. There is scope to adapt this by each of the local authorities with pilot projects to report on their local objectives.

**ACTION: CS to email round to the group to amend wording if necessary. Pilot Project Authorities to add specific text and release with their local press. CS to release with press elsewhere.**

#### **iv. Stakeholder Groups**

CS reported of her intention to start tapping in to Stakeholder Groups in the new year. She summarised those groups that could be tapped in to , those groups that need adaptation and groups that would have to be established as follows...

Access – adapted. Group set up bring together a representative from each Local Access Forum.

Urban/Rural – Adapted. Group set up bring together a representative from each Local Food/Produce Group.

Cultural – Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee tapped in to.

Natural – adapted the work of SK and ASERA and SECG.

GIS – to be established.

GEK reported that Renee Dickins was the South Gloucestershire contact for their Local Access Forum (which is shared with Bristol/N Somerset?).

AV reported that in Wales there is a National Contact for the Local Access Fora in CCW – Russell Diaz and Quentin Grimley.

GEK commented that for the estuary-wide Access group it is essential that there is a representative from the Pilot Project areas.

**ACTION: CS to pass contacts on to Access Officer in New Year.**

**HJ to investigate how the Environment Agency will input to this group.**

#### **v. Les Esturiales News / Article.**

CS reported that the Les Esturiales secretariat had called for an article from the member areas in the next couple of weeks.

It was decided that a Severn Estuary wide look at the aggregate issue and how applications are dealt with , its effect on development issues etc. would be interesting. A map illustrating the LA boundaries and licence areas would also be useful to add.

**ACTION: CS to liaise with GA.**

## 6. Joint Estuary-Groups Initiative

GA reported on the Joint Estuary Chairs Meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> November stating that everyone endorsed that the Joint Meeting in April would launch the SEP Joint Advisory Committee.

He stated that with CS and EM work would be done to put together a package of information / invitation to be sent out to partners/ JAC members in February. These initial ideas would be passed by the Chairs Group before sending out.

CS presented a list of organisations that this would go to. SK commented that it would be worth tiering them to indicate which were funding bodies / voting bodies/ watching brief etc.

GA stated that Monmouthshire would be happy to host the April meeting.

The terms of Reference should be agreed by the JAC at the April Meeting with a view to ratification.

GEK commented that she had spoken with their legal department and they confirmed that setting up a Partnership would take considerably longer than April. GA responded that this isn't the intention at this stage however it is something that can be looked at.

**ACTION: CS, EM and GA to take forward.**

CS added that it was her intention to prepare an Annual Report to take to this meeting. The group decided that the content needn't be particularly extensive, however an executive summary may be useful to summarise. Other issues to cover could be SEP success stories including national recognition e.g. ICZM Stocktake. It would also be useful to outline the up and coming issues that the SEP JAC would be addressing in the future to encourage Member support/interest i.e. aggregates and renewable energy.

GA concluded by saying that the role of the JAC would serve as a consultation body for UDPs and other plans and for major planning application around the Severn. However it may be that CS would hold planning lists and only the significant applications would be selected for consultation by the JAC rather than getting involved with minutia.

Such an Estuary-wide voice will help GOSW/WAG to recognise the benefits of partnership working.

**ACTION: CS to ensure that representatives are present at April's meeting.**

## **7. Communication Work Update**

### **i. Newsletter 4**

CS presented to the group the proofs of the newsletter and 'Who Does What' leaflet. Several minor amendments were suggested.

**ACTION: CS to make amendments, liaise with printers and distribute.**

### **ii. Website Diary Proposal**

CS introduced to the group the idea of developing an on-line diary for Estuary Groups meetings possibly on the Gateway website and of SEP meetings on the SEP website (with papers).

This idea was welcomed however GEK commented that it would act as back-up/historical record of meetings rather than replace current email communication.

GA warned that you have to take care that such a system wouldn't be too time consuming to maintain.

## **8. AOB – None**

## **9. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2pm, Monmouthshire – Interreg Working Group Meeting**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 10am, S Glos (TBC) – Steering Group Meeting**