

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Steering Group Meeting 2pm, 15th September 2003 South Gloucestershire Council, Thornbury

MINUTES

Present:

Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University (RB) (Chair)
Charlotte Street, SEP Project Officer (CS)
Colette Bosley, Monmouthshire CC (CB)
Gillian Ellis-King, South Glos. C (GEK)
Ann Valdes, Newport CC (AV)
John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan (JM)
Jessica Poole, CCW (JP)
Rick Turner, Cadw (RT)
Cllr. Charles Price, Bristol CC (CP)
Steve Knowles, ASERA (SK)
Rob Niblett, Gloucestershire CC (RN)
Alastair Chapman, Forest of Dean DC (AC)
Cardiff Council
Andy Hicklin, Environment Agency (AH)
Helen Jenkins, Environment Agency (HJ)

1. Apologies

George Ashworth, Monmouthshire CC
Simon Brett, ABP
Tony Prater, RSPB
Mike Johnson, Gloucester Harbour Trustees
Dick Sage, Bristol CC

Action

2. Minutes of last meeting (20th June 2003)

The minutes were accepted as a true representation of the Steering Group meeting on the 20th June 2003. Matters arising will be considered within the agenda.

3. Update on Interim Progress Report

CS referred to the Interim Progress Report that was circulated 15th August, reporting on the progress of key actions to get some feed back from partners. All agreed that this system of reporting was useful to inform on progress.

Since circulation, progress on reported tasks had been made and would be discussed later in the agenda.

4. SEP Finances

i. Update

CS presented to the group the current SEP finances since the account was renewed in June. The report laid out income, expenditure and balance which stood at £92,837. The most significant spend over the last 2 months had been £1244 paid to the Les Esturiales network to cover monies outstanding from the 02/03 subscription.

CS reported that she was in the process of setting up an Interreg account after which 2 sums, £6045(EA) and £13532(SEP), would be transferred to the new Interreg account as match funding for this project. The new SEP account balance would then be £73,260.

ii. Funding Formula

By way of introduction, CS informed the group of the plans to develop a Funding Formula for the SEP and other Estuary-wide initiatives. She explained that there was a need to formalise the way in which the Partnership was funded at present and try and ensure that it was done so in a fair and equitable manner. She tabled the latest draft of the Formula that the Funding Group had been working on over the last 6 months.

CS explained their intention to send this document around to Local Authorities and Government Agencies in the next month to introduce this funding system in time for FY 04/05. However before doing so she welcomed comments /suggestions from partners around the table on improvements to this formula and how such a document might be received by an organisation.

GEK commented that in order for such a funding formula to be accepted by Local Authorities it would have to be 'sold' to justify it to officers and Members. AV commented that you need to demonstrate the benefits and show that the SCOSLA subscription has been met for some Local Authorities. GEK suggested a sheet of bullet points of SEP functions and actions would be useful. SK said this could be taken from the Strategy.

CP echoed these remarks by saying that within the Bristol CC budget, monies given to the SEP and other Estuary related projects are particularly easy to axe if need be. If this situation arises, it may be possible to bring in contributions in kind.

HJ commented that at the moment it wouldn't be possible for the EA to accept such a document as their present project related funds committed to the SEP extend until April 2006.

GEK recommended that it would be easier to accept such a document if it were covering lower skeleton costs of running the partnership office and didn't include project related costs.

CS suggested she circulate another draft of the Funding Formula to the group by Friday 19th September covering these points, for comment by **Monday 29th September**.

**CS
ALL**

5. Joint Estuary Groups Initiative

CS explained to the group in the run up to the 2004 Joint Estuary Group Meeting Days, the Joint Estuary Chairs Group was due to meet at the end of October/November. This group will be considering how the initiative will be conducted in 2004 and to take on board any comments/suggestions from organisations/individuals on how they might be developed/improved.

CS alerted the group to a document that had been prepared analysing the responses to the

feedback forms that were received commenting upon the first Joint Estuary Groups Day held on the 28th April 2003. Many advantages were highlighted by individuals whilst disadvantages revolved around the fact that it was a long day of meetings and therefore a big time commitment to many.

CS explained that if partners had any suggests/comments over and above those highlighted within the document, they could pass them to her to over the next month.

6. Interreg

i. Transnational Partnership Agreement

CS reported to the group that there had been significant progress with the set-up of the Interreg project. All partners including the SEP were required to sign a Transnational Partnership agreement prior to the project commencing. This document was signed by Cardiff University – on behalf of the SEP and has been sent to the lead partner in Asturias.

ii. Kick – Off Meeting

CS reported that herself and GEK would be attending the Kick-Off meeting in the week beginning the 11th November.

GEK commented that a Les Estuariales meeting was scheduled also for this week. CS to ensure that Asturias are aware of this and every effort is made to combine the meetings.

CS

iii. Severn Estuary Interreg Working Group Meeting

- CS presented a draft structure of how the Interreg project might be managed. There was much discussion and it was decided that the Interreg Working Group (IWG), once the project was up and running, could meet before/after the larger Steering Group.

However at this stage, it was decided that the suggested individuals for the IWG would meet **2pm, Thursday 9th October, at Monmouthshire CC, Cwmbran**. CS and CB to arrange. CS to meet Rick Turner before hand.

CS/CB

CS to forward all project information to all IWG members at this stage.

CS

It was also decided there was no need for a focus group to steer each project strand as well as Stakeholder Fora. CS to readdress structure.

CS

RB encouraged the group to think about existing groups/networks that could be brought into the project for each strand.

- *Access – existing Local Access For a within Local Authority areas.*
- *Urban / Rural – similar groups within Local Authority Areas.*
- *Natural Heritage – re-initiate the Biodiversity Action Group, Severn Estuary Conservation Group.*
- *Cultural Heritage – Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee, Richard Osgood (S.Glos)*
- *GIS – Jenny Kemp (CCW), WAG*

- GEK commented that prior to the IWG Meeting, Project Specifications for each project strand should start to be worked up. CS to draft specifications. RT echoed the need for such a specification to be drafted in order for Cadw to be able to commit to their part in the project. CS to liase with RT over this.

CS

In order to cover the pilot project aspect of the specification all relevant partners to forward information to CS on their intended pilot projects by **Monday 29th September**.

**GEK/ AV
AC / RN
CB**

- The other issue to be considered, following the completion of the project specifications, was the tendering for/commissioning of contracts. Three strands were to be commissioned - Natural Heritage, Urban/Rural and GIS. Possible suggestions of organisations to approach included Slimbridge WWT (Natural Heritage) and the Adventa Group (Urban/Rural). CB to forward other possible contractors for the Urban/Rural strand.

CB

iv. Coastal Access Officer position

It was decided that the Coastal Access Officer advert could now be released, in order to offer a letter of appointment in November.

CS to arrange with personnel and arrange advertisements. The following publications/systems were suggested as modes of advertising:

CS

- Countryside Jobs Service
- Bob Earll's circulation list
- Environment News
- Cardiff University / EA and SEP websites.

7. Phase 2 bid options.

i. BAP Project

CS reported that herself and SK had met with the Avonmouth Biodiversity Partnership recently and had established that there was a definite desire amongst BAP Officers around the Severn to re-establish the Biodiversity Action Group. The BAG would then form a core of the Natural Heritage Stakeholder Group. Partners round the table were also keen to see this group up and running again however GEK suggested that they didn't meet until after the Natural Heritage project spec. had been written.

The group would then consider how to build on the current strand and develop a project bid looking at the implementation of LBAPs in an estuary-wide context, for submission Autumn 2004. The EA has put some money towards this action.

CS to contact Paula Machlachlin to ensure the Autumn 2004 deadline still stands.

CS

ii. Coastal and Marine Resources Centre, Cork Proposal.

RB explained that Cardiff University were involved in this project looking at how to bridge the gap that exists in coastal management between policy / decision makers (i.e. Local Authorities) and science (i.e. research institutions). CS explained that the SEP were approached as a possible pilot project area and had worked up a couple of ideas in how to overcome such institutional barriers in the Severn.

RB explained that she had worked with the lead partners in Cork previously on successful European projects.

However it was felt by partners around the table and by George Ashworth that this wasn't the right time to pursue such a project before the Interreg project had got off the ground. AV felt the project was very strategic which wasn't in line with the concrete actions referred to in the SES. GEK suggested referring Cork to the COASTATLANTIC project as some of the objectives were similar.

CS

7. Project Work Update

i. Newsletter 4

CS presented to the group her initial draft ideas on the Severn Tidings Newsletter 4. RT reported that he had written an article focussing on marine archaeology for inclusion – to be forwarded to CS. **RT**

JP/AV also suggested a news article – to be forwarded to CS. **JP**

CB suggested it may be worth reviewing the mailing lists when it comes to that stage, ensuring it includes Local Authority Members Support Offices.

All to forward comments and possible news articles to CS by **Monday 29th September**.

ii. Website

CS reported that there were 2 new pages on the website - the image database and the 'Who Does What Guide'. She thanked those partners who had contributed towards them. CS also reported that there had been an increase in users of the site over the last 6 months.

iii. Who Does What publicity leaflet

CS tabled a leaflet that she had drafted to publicise the Who Does What guide. Partners were supportive of the idea and agreed that it should be circulated with the newsletter. The following suggestions for improvement were made:

- Include the standard information on the SEP aims/objectives.
- Make it an A4 sheet folded and easier to read.
- Invite others to be included in the Guide.

CS

9. ICZM Stocktake

RB gave a brief summary of the ICZM Stocktake project explaining that it was being led by DEFRA including the devolved administrations with the consultants being Atkins. RB is taking a leading role in the Stocktaking exercise for Wales.

CS reported that she had been involved on behalf of the SEP at various stages through completing a questionnaire at the outset, giving an interview to Atkins as one of the case studies and participating in the recent workshop held in Newtown.

RB explained that there would be a draft report available by Christmas on the Stocktake's initial findings. CS to circulate this report when available to partners and the Joint Estuary Chairs Group. **CS**

10. Date of next Meeting

Monday 1st December, 2pm at Newport City Council.

In the interim, CS to produce and circulate a Progress Report to partners by 7th November. **CS**

11. AOB

HJ and/or AH to forward the Severn Salmon fisheries report to RT. **HJ/AH**

