

SEVERN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

Steering Group Meeting

10am, 27th February 2004

Thornbury, South Gloucestershire Council

MINUTES

Attendees:

George Ashworth (chairman), Monmouthshire County Council
Charlotte Street, Project Officer
Rhoda Ballinger, Cardiff University
Helen Jenkins, Environment Agency
John Marks, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Jessica Poole, CCW
Jim Mitchell, SEP
Simon Brett, ABP
James Clemence, Cardiff Council

1. Apologies for absence

Rick Turner, Cadw
Andy Hicklin, Environment Agency
Anne Valdes, Newport City Council
Gillian Ellis-King, South Gloucestershire Council
Kate Hoare, North Somerset Council

2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 1st December 2003 were accepted as a true record. GA/CS commented that most of the matters arising would be taken under the progress report and the agenda.

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, arrangements for the Joint Groups Day, Communication Projects and reported on external conferences and meetings attended.

Of particular note and points that would not be taken under the agenda, CS reported the following:

- The first Interreg claim had been submitted allowing spend up until Dec 03.
- The Press Release released at the end of January had attracted some coverage (CS tables copies of 2 articles from Bristol and South Glos local papers).

4. SEP Finances

CS presented to the group a spreadsheet detailing the SEP finances. The current balance stands at £86,889, however after transfers had been made into the Interreg account to cover match funding the balance will stand at £48,312. As 2 accounts will now be run by the SEP CS will report 2 budget summaries at future meetings.

RB/CS commented that for the time being the account is healthy due to past underspends however, current spend is greater than income, therefore the project may encounter difficulties in a few years time. RB/CS/NR are to meet in Cardiff on 2/3/04 to analyse future projections, after which they will inform GA of their findings and arrange a meeting.

ACTION: CS/RB and NR to meet re. financial projections.

ACTION: Above to arrange a meeting with GA to discuss.

5. Interreg Progress Report

For the benefit of newcomers around the table CS gave a brief overview of the aims and objectives of the Interreg project. She then proceeded to report the early progress of each of the 6 project strands.

i. Stakeholder Involvement

CS commented that progress had been made in the establishment of the estuary-wide stakeholder fora for each of the other project strands. She and the other officers delivering each strand were currently defining the membership of each group, drafting terms of reference, and confirming dates of meetings. The next Interreg working group meeting is to be held on March 19th after which the first stakeholder meetings will be held.

ii. Access

CS introduced Jim Mitchell as the recently appointed Access Officer who will be delivering this strand of the Interreg project.

JM introduced the strategic objectives of his work in looking at estuary wide strategies for both Access and Interpretation and went on to explain the nature of 4 different pilot projects. These 'on-the-ground' projects will be looking at upgrading access infrastructure and interpretation in Lydney, Monmouthshire, Newport and South Gloucestershire.

SB updated the group on a new piece of legislation, the International Ship and Port Facility and Security Code, which, from the 1st July when it comes into force is likely to exclude the general public from port areas. SB continued, Rights of Way currently go through Newport dock but this new code will override this previously permitted access.

JM queried how this change was going to be communicated to the public and stated that the SEP Access project and the various stakeholder fora could play a role in doing so.

JC asked whether and how this code might affect the Cardiff Bay area. SB replied he wasn't sure however, Cardiff Bay Harbour Authority would know by now if they were required to implement the code. GA commented that a code of this nature might allow for rationalisation of routes, whereby one is achievable rather than total exclusion.

SB queried as to when work would start on the ground. CS replied that we are likely to see things happening by the early summer.

iii. Urban/Rural Interdependencies

CS reported that this strand is to be delivered by Stuart Bardsley from South Gloucestershire Council.

As well as strategic work looking in to how local food producers are promoted in main stream markets there will be 2 pilot projects in the South Gloucestershire area. The first will look to encourage local schools to buy from local suppliers and the second will investigate the economic development of valued landscapes, e.g. orchards.

iv. Cultural Heritage

CS reported that this strand is to be delivered by Richard Osgood from South Gloucestershire Council.

He will be carrying out research into the Severn Estuary archaeological resource in an attempt to provide planners with guidance.

v. Natural Heritage / GIS

CS reported that Steve Knowles would be delivering both of these strands, employed by the SEP, he would also be fulfilling his role in producing ASERAs Scheme of Management 2 days per week.

CS reported that the next steering group meeting for the Interreg project will be held on the 29th and 30th March in Evora, Portugal. It is likely that CS, SB and GEK will be attending.

The issue was raised regarding a second bid. CS reported that the Interreg working group had been looking at ideas and the bid had to be submitted by the end of May. GA commented that he had reservations about going into a second bid so soon as time and effort had to be spent on the development of the JAC and the Funding Formula. It would be hard to commit match funding to a project before the SEP had formalised their own funding system.

RB commented that she was involved in an estuary/coastal projects Funding Workshop on the 2nd April.

ACTION: CS/SEP to attend.

6. Joint Estuary-Groups Initiative

CS tabled a suite of documents that had been prepared by herself and EM by way of introduction to the Joint Groups Day and the launch of the (interim) JAC.

The following were included

- Introductory invite letter
- Registration of interest/meeting registration
- Programme/Agenda
- Briefing Document

CS explained that several possible presenters/speakers had been approached, the list at present stood at:

- Deborah Dunsford (EA) – ChaMPs
- Alun Atwood (EA) – the Water Framework Directive
- ICZM Stocktake - Sam Rowbury / Jon McCue (unconfirmed)
- Renewable Energy – DTI / Carolyn Heeps (unconfirmed)

The Steering Group were in approval of the way things were developing, however made the following comments/amendments...

- A simple flyer explaining who and what the SEP is/does is needed up front
- The agenda was too full – better to focus the renewables issue
- The briefing document could be summarised in accordance with the agenda for circulation
- The full briefing document along with others could be put on the website to advertise the day

ACTION: CS/EM to finalise package of info and presenters

ACTION: Meet with GA

ACTION: Circulate to invitees by end of March

7. Communication Work Update

i. Newsletter 4 distribution

CS reported that Newsletter 4 had been circulated before Christmas to approx. 1500 on the mailing list. This generated a great deal of interest in general and several enquiries/comments were received from individuals/organisations.

Newsletter 5 would be going out after the Joint Day and it is likely that it will report on the event, however a focus had not yet been decided upon.

ii. Website

CS/JM presented to the group their ideas on how the website may develop to incorporate current work programmes etc. They stated that, as the website stands it very much offers information about the partnership rather than the Estuary itself. It is therefore quite dry and not very public friendly. As an output of the Interreg project it would be beneficial to develop an area of the site that was focused toward users of the estuary, providing information on access/walks in a coastal directory style package. RB

added that there are some good examples of these types of sites/projects on certain USA and Australian coastal management sites. The group were in agreement with this idea.

ACTION: CS and JM to take forward with the Interreg working Group

8. AOB

- **CCW / Jessica Poole**

JP informed the group of 'Exercise Hafren' that was being carried out by the BCCPA on 9th March, simulating an oil spill to test contingency plans.

The groups would be likely to hear feedback on this exercise at the joint day.

- **Wales Coastal Maritime Partnership / RB**

RB reported that herself and JM had attended a recent WCMP meeting. From the meeting arose the need for a paper that addressed very simply what ICZM is. The SEP, together with the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, CCW, and Swansea are to take this forward.

- **Partnerships Day , Leeds / CS**

CS reported that she is to attend a Partnerships Workshop day in Leeds organised by CoastNET on behalf of DEFRA to look at putting a case together for central government, to prove the worth/benefit of Partnerships/Fora. She will be attending with GEK. SB also commented that he too will be attending.

- **Environment Agency Horizon Scanning / Helen Jenkins**

HJ reported that the EA was holding a Horizon Scanning exercise trying to establish coastal pressures in the next 10 – 15 years and look at the EAs role. It is to focus on the Severn and to be held on March 30th in Aust. CS had forwarded several contacts to Atkins who are organising the day. Those who had received invites around the table said they would reply shortly.

9. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Monday 26th April, Joint Estuary Groups Day, Monmouthshire CC, Cwmbran