 Partnership Meeting
Minutes, December 3rd 2019.

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Attendees:

Julian Wolford, SWT

James Sells, (JDS), Chair

Catherine Doel, Waymark

Tim Brooks, EA

Jill Norman, Support Staffs

John Higgins, CVCS/local resident

Peter Green, NSRC

Dom Salter, KYT

Ann Cantrell, Farm facilitation group (CVF)

Jeff Sim, SWT

Apologies:

Nick Carter, Historic England

Steve Wood, CUCT

Sandra Satchell, KYT

Julie Arnold, CUCT
Jo Bagnall, SMDC

Tina Bardell, Trent Rivers Trust

Ian Kynaston, SWT

Mel Dyer, RSPB

Naomi Perry, ESBC

Sue Lawley, SCC

Jo Bagnall, SMDC

Rupert Smedley, CUCT

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked SMDC for use of the Dove Room

# CVLLP –Partnership Working

## Potential CVLLP PartnersLaver Leisure (Moneystone Park)

Peter Green hasn’t managed to contact LL.

## Model and Terms of Reference

December – No change. Will need addressing. **Action JS/SWT**

## Legacy Opportunities.

What is the remit and the legacy?

#### SWT strategy

Not signed off yet.

Overall conservation approach – concentration on nature recovery network map. Churnet Valley remains a priority area. Environment bill – area mapping used to influence policies and net gain. Aim is to produce a map of Staffordshire, picking up all the information they have. There is a common standard of mapping. Steers where opportunities are for habitat creation, restoration, change mitigation. Dave Cadman is running with it.

SWT have engaged with 4 local authorities so far.

**Action JSim**: Presentation at the next meeting.

#### Environment Agency

Tim Brooks, Environment Agency, Catchment Co-ordinator for Dove Catchment, which includes the Churnet, gave a presentation (available is on the Partner area. <https://new.churnet-valley.org.uk>)

The EA web resource could be used more.

Describes the issues that stop Dove Catchment from reaching Good in the Water Framework Directive. 41% failing because of agricultural pollution.

* 4 WEG projects
* 2 Farming Facilitation groups
* River restoration scheme
* Landscape partnerships

Opportunities for CVLLP to get more involved.

A group conservation / discussion was prompted by this presentation:

* JH asked about Himalayan Balsam – biological control release still hoped for in 2020.
* 11th March 2020 - Dove Catchment Partnership Day at Royal Oak, Mayfield, Ashbourne, DE6 2BN 9.30 – 3.15. Open to partnership organisations and members of the public. Reserve a place via rosie@trentriverstrust.org
* AC asked about role of farmers, and reports a reluctance from the farming community to accept their responsibility for damage to the environment. How should we engage farmers better as it is not currently working well enough?
* JSim said Agri environment scheme might be an opportunity. Trials – SWT are running a trial to engage with landowners to look at water quality, looking at the data and showing them the problem. Then working together to look at solutions and funding opportunities.
* Some farmers are receptive to discussions, others are intransigent. Why? Especially when payments disappear…
* AC says there is a difference between low intensity and intensive farmers, but they are all tarred with the same brush. We can’t deal with these groups the same, but at the moment we do have to.
* JW asked about flooding. How do you engage the public with the story of flooding? Tie the story back to the nature recovery framework, and climate change. There will be more months with too much water, and more months of drought.
* PG pointed out that businesses upstream are preparing hard engineering schemes that will affect those downstream. Tim pointed out that there are planning restrictions, but it would be better to have conversations.
* CD pointed out that there is a difficulty translating policies and the language of ecologists to the layman. CVLLP has active Facebook and newsletters and offered to feed out stories from partners.

## Grant funding update

#### National Lottery Heritage Fund

Sept – NLHF – local boards are able to look at projects.

#### Waterway grant (WEG)–

Cross over with EA and SWT near Tittesworth: Discussion on working smart and not duplicating.

EA are looking at the next 6-year programme from 2020/1 – Water Improvement Fund. Current work in progress is compiling a long list to go into the pipeline. Soon might be in a position to release the criteria publicly.

TTTV –

Funding for Transforming the Trent Valley launched 17th May 2019. It adjoins the CVLLP area at Denstone and will add connectivity to river and access projects. J Sim will update on this work.

## Volunteers, trainees, landowners, community engagement

#### Churnet Valley Volunteer Gang

Ian Kynaston is leaving and was thanked for his hard work over the last few years. It was one of the active posts funded by the lottery, but funding ended 2018 and the post has been funded by SWT for the last 12 months with a remit to work with 3rd party sites. Recently more work is being done on SWT sites as 3rd party sites have dried up. SWT’s Mark Young will run a fortnightly session on a Wednesday. And a second work party on alternative Tuesdays. Remit remains to work on 3rd party sites when opportunities arise. The volunteers know the new arrangements and will be encouraged to keep it going.

Riverfly network – IK will keep that going for EA as he enjoys this work. The equipment will remain available to him.

Lock up situation is being reviewed.

##### Tests and Trials

New environment land management scheme. SWT engaged with 17 landowners to come up with solutions for the area

#### Community Events

NB: All community events can be added by partners and members of the community <http://churnet-valley.guide>

#### A boards

Lafarge have offered to repair the boards and may contribute to new panels. **Action: JDS**

# Designations

## Country Parks:

### Consall Nature Reserve

23rd September: Staffordshire County Council and the RSPB have agreed a 100-year lease for the charity to take over the management and day-to-day running of the local authority-owned Consall Nature Park.

## Local Nature Reserves

## National Parks and AONB Review

## SSSIs (NE)

# Access Projects in the Churnet Valley

## Churnet Trail (Access for all)

Oakamoor tunnel bat survey was undertaken by Staffordshire Bat group and at some point the results will go into the Ecological Records.

**Actions:** Nicki’s route feasibility work needs to be revisited.
 PG & SW to walk the route and send to JB

JSim - Check whether Pedal Peak was contacted by Ian Wykes.

## Crumpwood access

Bridge over the weir – owned by South Staffs Water, as is the waterside. Public access would be ideal – bridge needs money spending on it and would require co-operation with the cottage owners. Condition and style of the bridge are both issues.

## Canal Towpath (CUCT)

# Heritage Projects in the Churnet Valley

## Heritage at Risk

**Action**: get a group action together for potential listings in the CV

### Mileposts (CUCT)

### Mileposts (John Higgins)

JH hasn’t progressed this. Milepost society would be prepared to do this if funding was available for materials and mileage etc. There are 53 in the CV.

### Spill Weir at Crumpwood (CUCT)

**Action**: It was suggested that Shane be invited to the Churnet Valley to look at Crumpwood and plateways. Nick Carter, HE to initiate.

### California Lock (CUCT)

**Action**: Peter Green offered to contact Laver Leisure for access to the line. Charlie Horsford has given access to the lock.

### Wagonways / plateways / tramways

Nothing new to report

# Bio-diversity projects in Churnet Valley

### Grassland & Woodland Management:

#### Grasslands:

RSPB - Ongoing, no specific project.

SWT – Cauldon quarries, Thorswood and Cotton Dell had grassland work from SWT. During the spring took green hay from nearby sites and spread it. Carrying on into 2020. Mitigating loss of SSSI.

#### Woodland management

How to make woodland management more financially viable. Nothing new to report.

Ecosystems services mapping – **Action** JSim to check and ensure JB has latest report commissioned by Ian Wykes for CVLLP.

Latest version of the ecosystems services mapping is on the partner portal https://new.churnet-valley.org.uk

## Crumpwood Fish pass (EA)

CUCT use. **Action** - Tim Brooks offered to follow this up and liaise with SW.

## Churnet Valley Farmers

2 WEGs for the groups. Having difficulty engaging. One EA plan has scared farmers.

White Peak – Dove at Mayfield, restore a wetland area and water meadows. Having some planning issues and the costs associated.

19th Farmer Vision event – discuss things looked at previously about certification, produce, brand, water environment – discussion forum with farmers.

##### Discussions and comments resulting from this report:

* ‘Farm Herefordshire’ is a branding project that links to environmental standards.
* Question was asked if anyone knows about SCC carbon neutral targets – date 2030. Do we know the strategies to achieve this?
* Some farmers and landowners struggle to know what they can do to make a difference. Need to drill into the opportunity map – that is realistic for a member of our group. Can we create an online resource that can be shared between partners? SWT said they are working towards this; Tim can provide Woodland for Water layer. Ann can use this to give farmers ideas.

## Badger vaccinations –

CVF reported that are finding that farmers are starting to become sceptical about Wildlife Trusts for stopping culls. It is a step backwards in terms of the trust between farmers and Natural England and Derbyshire Wildlife Trusts is potentially implicated because they are quite vocal in their campaigning.

KYT - Badger vaccination opportunity on their land re-offered.

## Wild Churnet (SWT)

('Wild Churnet' is the working title SWT are using for all projects to improve biodiversity in this area.)

Tufa springs identification – looking at funds to manage these sites. Reports to manage this will be made available.

Crayfish – native crayfish safe sites created in the headwaters.

**Wall Grange** - river channel, grassland and the fen improvements. SWT are looking at both historical & Lidar data.

**Solomons Hollow** - SWT will commence work to install bypass channels at the weirs, likely start 2021.

**Gun Moor -** on the boundary but within Churnet watershed. SWT raising funds to purchase Gun Moor - 200 acres of undesignated land. WEG for fencing and scrub work. An active group of local people helping to raise funds. Need £150k

**Quixhill Bridge river restoration** has been completed.

**flood management and headwater work** ‘Slowing the Flow project’ – Morridge woodland planting in the cloughs for NFM.

Roaches update – artificial ditches are being blocked following surveys and feasibility. To restore blanket bog and NFM. EA

(EA) Headwaters – large woody material chopped and dropped at headwater near Winking man. 7 ha of land at the watershed being planted. Parallel to the road, running into Morridge.

### Riverfly Survey (SWT)

IK is talking to the Dove Catchment partnership. Looking at getting more people trained to undertake the Riverfly surveying when it is the right season.

### Beaver release (SWT)

A feasibility study on whether this could be done in the area with a view to improving water quality. Narrowed it down from 30 possible areas to 2 or 3 potential locations in Staffordshire, including one privately owned site in Churnet. Will be looking at fundraising. These will be fenced spaces for beavers. There is a lot of evidence that beavers work well for bio-diversity.

### Engineered log jam at Cheddleton (CVLLP)

PG said they would like advice on managing the willow as it is growing well and has done the job.

### Invasive Species

#### Himalayan Balsam

Biological control - Release of biological control now put back until 2020.

#### *Signal Crayfish*

#### Japanese Knotweed

## Other news from Partners

#### NSR

Awaiting news of European funding in new year. Leek site no longer owned by Hughes, a developer has bought it.

100k cost to re-instate the track bed after the flooding so that the Santa and Steam was able to go ahead. SMDC have been really helpful and this has been appreciated.

# Dates of next meetings

2019 dates:

2nd June

8th Sept

1st December