



Tuesday 4th December 2018, 14.00-16.00, Humberhead Peatlands National Nature Reserve, Bawtry Road, Hatfield Woodhouse, Doncaster, DN7 6BF

Attendees: Matt Cox (MC), David Hargreaves (DPH), Helen Kirk (HK), Tim Kohler (TK), Helen Laycock (HL), Melissa Massarella (MM), Neil Pike (NP)

Apologies: Tim Allen (TA), Robert Burnett (RB), Tony Devos (TD), Catherine Leonard (CL), Martin Oldknow (MO), Tammy Smalley (TS), Cllr Sue Wilkinson (SW)

Discussions/Key Points	For Action By
<p>1. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising – NP</p> <p>NP took members through the actions from the previous meeting and the following was noted:</p> <p><u>Action 1 – Management plan circulation</u> – Complete.</p> <p><u>Action 2 – Lab equipment list</u> – To carry forward.</p> <p><u>Action 3 – Invertebrate monitoring report</u> – NP has spoken to Richard Smith previously but asked DPH to speak to him again on 5 Dec.</p> <p><u>Action 4 – Pump asset transfer</u> – JBA are aware that the transfer needs to take place before the end of the project. DPH explained that, prior to transfer, assets must be inspected by an independent engineer to determine that they are fit for purpose and safe for NE staff to operate. However, the IDB are not providing the required documents for the inspection to take place. The IDB have already handed the keys for the pump to NE and provided a letter stating that the pump is working but there are still snagging issues. NP confirmed that a conference call is taking place with the NE legal team on 5 Dec with the aim that they will write to the IDB to remind them of their legal responsibility to provide the documents required for the asset transfer. NE’s external funding team are also assisting with ensuring that all documents are EU auditable.</p> <p><u>Action 5 – Potential relationship with universities</u> – NP confirmed that Notts WT have been considering a zero value contract with academic institutions that allows them free access to the facilities at the Idle Valley NNR in return for any data that they collect. RB is keen to pursue this at the Humberhead Peatlands NNR but NE’s commercial team will need to investigate if this arrangement is possible for a governmental organisation as opposed to an NGO.</p> <p><u>Action 6 – IDB funds transfer</u> – DPH reported that of the £347k that</p>	<p>Action 1: DPH to circulate the list of potential equipment to be purchased for the lab.</p> <p>Action 2: DPH to speak to RS about the invertebrate monitoring report on 5 Dec and update members w/b 10 Dec.</p>



<p>the IDB have not spent, £318k will be transferred to NE with the remainder being held back for contractor retention fees.</p> <p><u>Action 7 – Conference proceedings</u> – DPH confirmed that a verbatim transcription of the conference has been produced but the full conference proceedings are to follow.</p> <p><u>Action 8 – Steering Group meeting date</u> – Complete.</p> <p><u>Action 9 – Future purpose of the Steering Group</u> – See item 6.</p>	
<p>2. Progress Update: Key Milestones/Operational Activities – DPH</p> <p>Project Performance Report</p> <p>DPH took members through the LIFE+ Project Performance Report for the most recent reporting period, providing an update on progress.</p> <p><u>Action A1</u> – Project establishment. The project extension has been granted until 30 June 2019. HL has reduced her hours on the project to one day a week and will finish working on the project altogether at Christmas. NP confirmed that her post will hopefully be replaced after Christmas.</p> <p><u>Actions C1-6</u> – Additional works. DPH reported that one contract has been let and the contractor started on site on 3 Dec. A further two contracts have gone out to tender. Only one tender was received for one of these contracts but this will be let provided that Defra procurement are happy that at least three quotations were requested even if they were not received. There were no tenders offered for the other contract so requests for quotations will be sought.</p> <p><u>Actions D1-4</u> – Monitoring. DPH reported that the invertebrate monitoring report is still to be received from Richard Smith. The Economic Impact Assessment will be re-tendered to allow for inclusion of the project extension. The report on cultural ecosystem services will be produced by Kathryn Arnold at the University of York following her supervisee, Hannah Curzon, terminating her PhD.</p> <p><u>Actions E1-4</u> – Communications. DPH reported that, as part of the project extension, there will be an end of project celebration aimed at the local community and volunteers and hopefully attended by the new NE Chief Executive, along with a one-day networking event with other LIFE projects within the UK and Ireland.</p> <p><u>Actions F1-4</u> – Project operation and monitoring. DPH reported that the EU requires a Layman’s Report and Technical Report to be produced. The final audit contract has been let but LubblockFine may</p>	



<p>alter their pricing given the project extension delaying the work for a year. However, the contract could be re-tendered if necessary.</p>	
<p>3. Project Extension Update – DPH</p> <p>DPH reported that the project has been granted an extension to the end of June 2019. The Project Manager and Project Administrator roles will continue until the end of September 2019 to allow for reporting and audit. NP reported that the extension of the original three-year project into a five-year project means that the resulting additional staff costs will need to be covered from the overheads budget and NP is currently taking advice from NE’s finance team on this. Lucy Ryan will produce an addendum report on the nightjar work including another season of field data. A further year of water level monitoring will also be reported on. DPH is currently finalising the latest progress report for the EU following receipt of comments from the EU Monitor. This will be the final progress report to be produced before the end of the project.</p>	
<p>4. IDB Transfer of Funds – DPH</p> <p>Covered under item 1, Action 6.</p>	
<p>5. Outstanding Actions</p> <p>DPH confirmed that the following actions are outstanding and will be completed during the project extension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of project celebration event • LIFE Projects’ networking event • Layman’s report • Technical report • Additional conservation works • Audit <p>NP reported that the project has been working more closely with the NE external funding team, and this will continue into the New Year.</p>	
<p>6. Future purpose of the Steering Group</p> <p>NP reported that the EU and Defra have expectations regarding the legacy of the project and the Steering Group may influence this legacy as well as supervising the closing down of the formal project.</p> <p>The Steering Group agreed that an important legacy of the project</p>	



should be the monitoring work that has been conducted, the external communication of the results, and the continuation of this work as far as possible. The project shaped existing monitoring carried out by volunteers into a more systematic form, including Large Heath surveys, water level monitoring and vegetation monitoring. This work should continue with volunteers but TK explained that wider invertebrate monitoring will be more difficult to continue due to the time commitment involved and contracting this work out is probably not an option. The evidence from the monitoring reports should be used to inform the effective future management of the SSSI/SAC/SPA under the Steering Group's guidance. NP reported that a data review would be taking place in the New Year and the monitoring reports could be supplied to the Steering Group ahead of the next meeting.

NP highlighted the need to take advantage of the facilities that are available at the new NNR base, which are now the best at any NNR within England, and to recognise the potential benefits other than cash that they could bring. The Steering Group felt that identifying tangible projects that could be promoted to volunteers, the local community and universities would be an efficient approach. Having 'off the shelf' projects ready to go would also be more attractive to academic institutions in particular. DPH suggested that the end of project celebration event could be used to showcase future potential projects. TK confirmed that universities are generally keen to use the site but are not prepared to pay to do so and in fact often expect payment from NE. Zero value contracts could be a way forward as NE will not be able to provide any funding. There is an existing Memorandum of Understanding with York St John University which allows students to undertake projects on the NNR if the data is supplied to NE. MC highlighted that Lincoln University have just started an undergraduate course in Ecology so could be targeted. TK stressed the importance of not foregoing engagement with the local community, volunteers and naturalists in favour of engagement with universities, and instead drawing these two elements together for example through upskilling the local community to university entry level. MM suggested that the cultural ecosystem services work should be built on to involve the local community further, for example through social media. NP reported that the Humberhead Levels Partnership HLF bid involved a cultural element and the NNR is a key site.

HK asked if the Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum could use the LIFE Lab and, if so, how much would it cost and what equipment is available? TK confirmed that the pricing policy for use of the LIFE Lab has not been agreed but small groups are likely to be charged only a token amount if anything at all. NP confirmed that the equipment to be purchased for the LIFE Lab is still to be discussed

Action 3: DPH to circulate monitoring reports to the Steering Group before the next meeting.



<p>but the budget is approximately £15k/20k Euros. The Steering Group felt this was a limiting budget, especially if a projection microscope was included, and asked if money could be found from elsewhere within the project budget. DPH reported that there is a certain amount of allowance for moving unspent funds between categories but this would require confirmation from the NE finance team.</p> <p>The Steering Group agreed that it should continue to meet going forwards but felt that it would like to be generally more engaged with processes and decisions rather than just being a forum for reporting updates.</p>	
<p>7. AOB</p> <p>NP reported that NE has been asked to provide Conservation Objective Supplementary Advice for all SACs and SPAs in the UK within three months due to the infraction risk for the government from the EU for the lack of current detail. The designated SAC feature of the NNR is raised mire and the designated SPA feature is nightjar. NE is legally required to consult on the draft Supplementary Advice and NP will circulate the draft to the Steering Group.</p> <p>HK highlighted that crane are not a designated feature of the SPA because they were not present at the site at the time of designation and asked if this could be rectified. NP reported that an SPA review is being conducted nationally, led by JNCC and this could represent an opportunity for correcting this omission. The important invertebrate assemblages on the NNR are not designated features of the SSSI either.</p>	<p>Action 4: NP to check the status of the JNCC led SPA review.</p> <p>Action 5: NP to discuss with Adelle Rowe the fact that the SSSI designation does not reflect all of the features of interest of the NNR.</p>
<p>8. Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The Steering Group agreed to meet next on 26 Feb 2019.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 4pm.</p>	