

## Wensum Working Group meeting minutes - 10 April 2018 – Taverham Mill

### Attending:

Jez Wood - EA  
Tom Sherwood - EA  
Rory Sanderson - EA  
Chris Oakley  
Dennis Willis  
Roger Gibbons  
Tim and Tisha Aldiss  
Terry Lawton  
Tim Venes  
Tim Ellis  
Colin Howlett  
Terry Houseago  
Bob Chambers  
Ursula Juta – NRT  
Kelvin Allen - AT

### 1. Your Fishery Outcomes

Tom Sherwood: Coordinated 11 pilot scheme across the country. Evaluation report in the process of being completed. The end seems to point to financial commitment. Reports point to

- Managing expectations – i.e. a group can't do everything in 18 months
- Financing staff time – some have funding, others don't
  
- Ursula Juta: - outcomes covered – silt traps at Gt Witchingham complete; potential for more on eRaynham state and just above Lenwade mill, below Brigham's farm to stop silt and pesticides running off into the ditches and main river.
  
- Kelvin – **Action** – need to join steering group to form a silt group
  
- Jez W – talk of a specific silt group inc FWAG, DTC, EA, NRT
  
- Tim Aldiss mentioned lack of weed in sections of the Wensum –theory is that swans eat it
  
- Roger G – asks how much silt traps cost and how effective they are -
  
- Tim E asks how much silt is going into the river; Rory S made the point that some silt is needed and TH mentioned that his stretch varies

Tom S asked the group if this has been beneficial or has it been a talking shop? RG mentions that his fly fisher has been more active than WWG. Terry L said it has been useless. Crayfish – no go. Cormorant licence – no go. DTC are doing silt traps so why us? Ursula explained that without this group, the silt traps would not have been paid for.

Tom S asked about cormorant licence. Kelvin explained that the area licence did not go forward due to lack of consent from other landowners and fisheries. Roger G mentioned that the numbers are not shown on stats. Kelvin mentioned the AT recording form is too complicated. Colin mentioned that there are hundreds along towards Wayford Bridge. Tom S mentioned the pilots show that predation is a common theme and an emotive topic. It's not easy to arrange an area licence. Kelvin A and Terry H state perhaps more individual licences would be better.

Dennis Willis – crayfish licence application to Marcus Sibley – Jez W acknowledges the application. Licence required to trap, Helen B worked hard to trap for scientific purposes but there was not enough in place to be able to get a licence to trap on the Wensum.

Rory S – finance – early 2017 kick start at Gt. Witchingham/The Blackwater. Key action was driven by sediment. Highways were involved but the scheme was ready to go on the Blackwater and we had match funding through Waterlife so the money went towards that through the BCP.

Terry L expressed that the group was pointless because the work was done without the group making decisions. The group do not actually own the money. Roger G wants to know if there are other restoration projects going on. Jez W **action** to ask Adam Thurtle for any plans. Again, there needs to be more coordination on Wensum work overall with a catchment steering group. Terry H says there's a lack of input from Anglers who are on the ground.

Tom S mentioned assisted stock recovery. NE policy will not allow. Roger G asks would it carry more clout in applying through the WWG rather than individual fisheries. Tom S explained it wouldn't be the case because Your Fisheries isn't the place to do so. Jez W explains that the SAC designation requires fulfilling specific criteria. Chris O says, and all agree, that all those criteria ARE met. Tom S discussed that this needs catch returns and scientific data. Roger G has catch return and EA data. Chris O states "as a group we want stocking" and the group can form a cohesive management plan to do this. Reduction on EA monitoring gives us too little data. Chris O asks why if we can run a pilot project.

Roger G has had successful application - 3800 roach and dace and a few chub from IDB ditch to main river. Jez W explained that this shows an underlying problem and stocking won't fix it in the long term. Does the group offer more in strength rather than individual applications?

- Action – this stocking has been in the action plan since 2005 in the other groups in the FAP
- Make it a Your Fisheries action point.

Jez W - **Action** - look into why we can't stock the Wensum. Currently the reason is because stocking is unsustainable but nobody is able to tell us why, so it is only fair to stock until EA/NE are able to fix it. Tim V highlights that the stocking should only be seen as an interim solution and that there are far more underlying problems affecting fish stocks.

Kelvin A – moving on – no funding for NRT. New group BASG to carry on, feeding into CIC which includes insurance, bank details, financial structure with locked assets. BASG formed as a CIC on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2017, with members and directors. Have 20+ volunteers to do more on the Wensum. Kelvin A asks for 2 members of WWG to represent on BASG. BASG has NE, EA and AT. Most members of WWG agree that they are already busy, and Chris O pointed out that this WWG will fold if they cannot have 2 members who will run WWG and sit on BASG. Kelvin A expects the WWG to email him with 2 representatives from WWG to join BASG by week end 13/04/2018. 20<sup>th</sup> May launch in The Forum. Volunteer open day by BASG on 17<sup>th</sup> April.

GDPR – KA has group email account but not allowed to hold details after May. BASG holds a solution but further groups will not have the permission to hold all contact details.

Abstraction: Tim E highlighted the flow problems at Lyng. Flow duration curves produced by EA

18 days a year river could be below environmental flow index. EA and NE have produced a new habitats directive... due to the SSSI and SAC status of the Wensum. Fakenham – over extracted by 1.2 MI/day. EA will be limiting the abstractors upstream. Lenwade – flow surplus 2.6ml/d.

Hellesdon – exceeding flow 193 days per year. AW moving abstraction point to Heigham street, outside SAC which allows more water in the SAC area – being reviewed 2019. Terry H pointed out that the mill owners are not responsible and leave gates open for long periods of time. EA has modified and revoked 39 licences recently to improve the flow. It is an ongoing project. Reviewed in 2024 but constant reporting to EA by Anglers is key to short term and overall long term reviews.

RDF plant Lenwade – is the plant already being used for recycling? 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

Close. 18:30