



Humber Nature Forum

10.00 a.m. Thursday 21 September 2017
Humber Room, The Ropewalk, Barton upon Humber

Minutes

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Present

Mark Adams	Environment Agency
Kevin Bayes (KB)	Humber Nature Partnership
Daryl Burdon (DB)	Acting Chair/ Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies.
Darren Clarke (DC)	Humber Nature Partnership
Chris Clement (CC)	National Grid
Mike Coverdale (MC)	Humber Nature Partnership
Katy Duke (KD)	The Deep
Tony Edwards (TE)	HNP Chair /Humber Environmental Managers Network
Ben Jones (BJ)	The Deep
Gordon Kell (GK)	Humber Nature Partnership
Adrian Koster (AK)	Royal Geographic Society
Barry Longstaff (BL)	Humber Conservation Volunteers
Amanda Longstaff (AL)	Landowner
Lucas Mander (LM)	Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies
Chloe Morris (ChM)	University of Hull
Cliff Morrison (CIM)	HNP board member
Carly Pettett (CP)	Natural England
Laura Rhodes (LR)	Environment Agency
Pete Rogers (PR)	Xceptional Designs
Dick Shillaker (DS)	Yorkshire Branch of British Dragonfly Society
Chris Skinner (CS)	University of Hull
Leanne Smart (LS)	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
Peter Short (PS)	RSPB
Tim Smith (TS)	North East IFCA
James Thurlow (JT)	Intertidal Ltd
Sarah Tock (ST)	Knauf
Ralph Ward (RW)	South Holderness Internal Drainage Board
Alistair Welch (AW)	Natural England
Susan Wilson (SW)	Natural England

Apologies

Andrew Gibson (AG)	HNF Chair/Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
Tom Jeynes	ABP
Alan Jones	Humber Nature Partnership
Emily Ledger	Natural England
Matt Millington	Hull and East Yorkshire LNP/ North Yorkshire and York LNP
Sally Osgerby	
Tim Page	Natural England

Tina Raleigh	ABP
Dave Sargent	Able UK
Tammy Smalley	Lincs Wildlife Trust
Fran Smith	Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
Clare Sterling	Lincs Wildlife Trust
Andrew Taylor	North Lincolnshire Council
Simon Wellock	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
Steve Westbrook	Natural England

As Acting Chair DB welcomed the group. He explained that AG had recently stepped down as Chair of the Forum, reflecting changes in his Wildlife Trust role. He thanked Andy for the enormous contribution he has made to the Forum and to the Humber Advisory Group before it. Those thanks were echoed by other members of the group including DC and AK.

DB will continue to fill the role of Acting Chair of the Forum until a formal vote for the new chairman can be organised in advance of the next meeting in March 2018.

All attendees introduced themselves to the Group.

2. Humber Management Scheme (HMS) and Catchment Partnership update

KB summarised the highlights from the HMS work of 2017 to date. He also gave a brief reminder of the European Marine Site, the defining international designations and the important habitats. A reminder of the inception of the Humber Nature Partnership and its relationship to the Humber Management Scheme and the Humber Catchment Partnership followed.

Key roles and recent highlights included:

- Formal reporting to government on the state of the estuary and progress under the Humber Management Scheme Action Plan on behalf of the Humber Estuary Relevant Authorities Group. This includes quarterly reports and an annual report.
- A programme of workshops including
 - A review of Catchment Management Planning
 - In conjunction with Natural England and the BTO, a review of existing knowledge relating to declining bird populations on the estuary
 - In conjunction with Natural England an initial assessment of the new on-line Conservation Advice for the Humber EMS
 - An unveiling to partners of the developing In Combination database to assist conservation planning around the estuary
- Recreational Disturbance, which has a number of key elements
 - Inputs to development of the England Coast Path
 - A revision of the existing Codes of Conduct
 - The development of Local Recreation Management Plans for key locations around the estuary
 - The Humber Hounds annual Humber Bridge Walk

There are a series of upcoming workshops which are open to all

- September A review of monitoring around the estuary
- October Habitat creation – What, where and how
- November Considering wildlife in emergency planning
- December The use of drones

3. The proposed Skeffling to Outstray Managed Realignment

LR gave an overview of current progress on the latest managed realignment project to be considered for the estuary. It is a partnership project between the Environment Agency and ABP. For EA, the driver is the need to compensate for the proposed Hull Humber Frontage flood defence project and for ongoing coastal squeeze against the existing defences around the estuary. For ABP, the need is for habitat to mitigate for future port development.

The objectives of the project differ for the two partners. For EA it is to create mudflat and saltmarsh in undefined proportions, for ABP, the need is to create mudflats.

An enormous amount of work has been undertaken over the past 12 months including

- Mapping archaeological finds
- Understanding soils and materials on site
- Investigating any contamination on site
- A topographic survey of the drainage channels
- Creating a 3-D model for the site
- A water movement study
- A review of existing flood defences
- A report on high-level options
- A programme of community engagement

The plan is to remove most of the existing fronting embankments, to create an additional area of wet grassland and to raise the standard of protection of an existing pumping station. The project will enable the delivery of improved flood protection in the area, allowing the scheme to maintain a 1 in 200 year standard of protection, which would not have been possible to fund otherwise. The contamination identified will be maintained on site and carefully capped.

Currently, work is progressing towards a planning application. A design freeze has been implemented, leading up to submission of the application. There will be two applications – Outstrays and Welwick to Skeffling. The intention is to use materials from on site to build the new flood banks, minimising the need to import or export of large amounts of material. High quality construction principles will be utilised. There will be some additional traffic, bringing plant onto site and the movement of the workforce. Any impacts on local activity will be minimised by careful planning of movement times.

A significant issue for management realignment sites surrounds the future management of these areas and the ability of local people to continue to have a voice in the processes. Consequently, the managing agents will be chosen by a competitive tender process, an important element of which will be how the local community continue to be engaged. A tender process will begin in early 2018.

Next steps

- 1) Finalise the design – especially the location of the access footpath
- 2) Developing the detailed drainage design
- 3) Development of plans for adjacent flood defences
- 4) Site management tender
- 5) Ongoing community engagement

Questions from the Forum

- 1) What is the nature of the contamination? LR was unable to answer in detail but will investigate the possibility of sharing the report
- 2) Have lessons been learnt from previous habitat creation experience. LR felt they had leading to the intention to provide additional wet grassland as functionally linked habitat which will improve the

ecological functioning of the other habitats; the estuary facing flood banks will be completely removed to maximise the connectivity of the new site to existing estuary functions; the recognition that there is uncertainty around the process of evolution of the habitats created. Natural England and RSPB have been heavily involved in the design development. Frampton managed realignment site was visited to learn from its success.

- 3) The wet grassland will require a water source to maintain habitat quality into spring and summer. Will there be an associated freshwater pool? LR suggested that water would be available from the Winestead Drain and a pool was not planned.
- 4) How had the intertidal objectives been arrived at? The conservation objectives were agreed with Natural England, based on the bird species it needed to support.
- 5) How long would the sign off process for the site be? LR stated that, as with other sites it would take 10 years for the habitats on site to develop.
- 6) Did the site require an Environmental Assessment? LR stated that it did and it would form part of the planning application. The work would be carried out by the project consultants CH2M. The work would also require a marine license.
- 7) What issues are still being discussed with the local community? LR stated that the main issues include the level of access to the new banks; the details of the construction practices; and a continuing opposition from some local people to the project as a whole. The inclusion and location of the footpath remain the most significant issue.
- 8) What is the timescale for the project? LR noted the planning application would be submitted in late 2017 or early 2018. It was hoped that work would begin on site in 2018, depending on the length of the planning process. The breach was anticipated for 2020.
- 9) Would it be possible to create shallow freshwater ponds on the landward side of the new flood banks to benefit freshwater invertebrates? LR stated that shallow ponds were being considered.
- 10) What were the plans for Haverfield Quarry? LR stated that as an existing SSSI the treatment of the quarry site would be sensitive with the new flood defences in the vicinity being sheet piling to minimise its footprint, careful screening of the site, and limited access.
- 11) Is the finance for the project guaranteed? Is there any possibility of only part of the project being undertaken? LR stated that the intention is to complete the whole project and given that the habitat creation is a legislative requirement it is likely to be looked on favourably for grant from the treasury. Part of the existing bank rebuilt after the 2013 surge requires strengthening. This was being taken into account within the project planning.

4. Humber updates

4.1 GK Humber Nature Partnership

GK outlined the continuing work at Barton and Barrow Clay Pits. Management planning for the site is being developed at three levels – individual pit, groups of hydrologically connected pits and a whole site strategy

4.2 CM explained his personal involvement in

- The review of little tern attempted breeding on the south bank
- Disturbance of the major wader roost site at Cleethorpes by personal watercraft
- Eel grass survey. The small patch near Horseshoe Point was evident this year

4.3 SW Natural England

SW explained the ongoing internal process within NE relating to developing the England Coast Path. This included considerations of incorporating the Coast Path into the Skeffling Outstray managed realignment project.

4.4 MA Environment Agency

MA reported on the following

- A preferred option has been achieved for the South Ferriby flood defence project and a business plan is being developed. The work is in conjunction with North Lincs Council and Cemex. The proposals will protect people and property without reducing any future opportunities relating to the wider estuary flood risk review.
- A strategic water management plan for Barton Ponds Scheme. A comprehensive review has been carried out and work will be undertaken as funding is achieved.
- The Port of Immingham scheme is progressing well with ABP putting in new lock gates with support from EA
- The work on Able Logistics and Marine Park has slowed
- An asset management plan is being developed for the Ancholme catchment. It will address water quality, habitats and recreation.
- A number of legal avenues are being considered to divert the Donna Nook footpath which is holding up the managed realignment project in the area

4.5 PR noted that artists around the estuary were holding Open Studio sessions to allow the public to visit gardens and see a range of sculptures

4.6 JT has been mostly working on the west coast for National Grid

4.7 CC National Grid

CC noted that the tunnel from Paull to Goxhill to house a new gas pipeline is progressing. The tunnel will be 5kms long and have a diameter of 4.5m. Completion is planned for March/April 2020. More detail can be found on the website – www.riverhumberpipeline.com. There is also a Community Grant Scheme available offering grants of up to £20,000.

4.8 KD The Deep

KD noted The Deep's plans to be more public facing. They are keen to work on projects investigating behavioural change. The Deep supports the Tansy Beetle Project.

4.9 CS University of Hull

CS is undertaking a 5 year project building on the earlier Dynamic Humber Project. Its role is to investigate changes in the estuary sediment processes and build models to support resilient manageability.

4.10 PS RSPB

PS reported

- completion of the Whitton Island Habitat Management project. It has taken 6.5 years from inception to delivery. It was completed after 1 month on site. The pools created are already being used by birds.
- Disturbance at the Tetney reserve is creating staff safety issues after threats have been made by a site user.

4.11 LR Environment Agency

LR mentioned

- The continuing Comprehensive Review of the existing Flood Risk Strategy for the estuary
- There is a meeting of the Flood Risk Liaison Forum set for Friday 29th September, open to all

4.12 MC outlined the problems faced by little terns on the estuary

- 14 chicks fledged this season after problems with electric fencing

- 150 chicks fledged in the last 5 years which should allow the colony to increase in numbers
- Little terns are in unfavourable condition on the estuary, which has a target of 51 pairs
- In the past there were 5 colonies on the estuary
- The current Beacon Lagoons protection project is run by a charity and EA. Current funding from an EU Life + project ends next year

Kilnsea Wetlands, created by EA as habitat to replace a wader roost area at Beacon Lagoons is working well for birds and as an accessible visitor facility.

Colonies of sea aster mining bees have been found at Welwick and Tetney. At Tetney the colony also supports the parasitic wasp species dependent solely on the bee species.

4.13 DS Dragonfly Society

DS reported on

- two unusual wasp species in a sand lens within a low clay cliff between Welton and North Ferriby. These are the Common Spiny Digger Wasp and the Bee Wolf.
- A significant emergence of red-veined darter dragonflies at Oakhill Reserve

4.14 LM Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS), University of Hull

LM is working on

- A 2 year study of pink footed geese using satellite tags to map their migration routes. The study is funded by EON who are interested in any interactions with their offshore windfarm.
- A PhD scholarship funded by Hull Uni. To investigate wader movements around the estuary, particularly their use of terrestrial habitats.

4.15 TS North East Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Agency

TS reported

- Completion of the north bank eel grass survey. The colony is expanding. The byelaw box which protects the colony is under review to ensure it is the right size.
- IFCA operate a drone which is used to support their monitoring systems, catch return systems and the Humber trawling permit scheme
- The plan is to phase out trawling on the Humber
- A DEFRA funded MSc student studying bait collection. The project will operate at Cleethorpes and Humberston as well as on the north bank. It will interview anglers and tackle shops and undertake low water surveys.
- With Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, a survey of bass using the estuary is being undertaken. A national review of bass nurseries did not name the Humber, so different methodologies are being used. Bass are being tagged and the angling community is to be involved in reporting any tags found.

4.16 DC Humber Nature Partnership

DC reported first on behalf of Alan Jones (Conservation Officer HNP). Recent work includes

- Assessing the island project at Cemex. A new high tide roost was created in a joint project between Cemex, RSPB and HNP.
- Working with ABP in a woodland near Immingham. Local school groups have been undertaking simple habitat audits. A report on the work is due.
- Continuing woodland management in Birkenshaw's Covert, owned by Totale. More funding has been achieved from landfill tax via Able UK. This allows woodland management, creation of new ponds and involvement of school groups.

DC then outlined other HNP issues

- New HNP members include Knauf, Barton upon Humber Wildfowlers, North Lincs and Humberside Sailing Club
- Work continues on the creation of management plans for Barton and Barrow Clay Pits in conjunction with the Clay Pits Group of owners and managers. The intention is to create a large project linking environmental improvement of the pits with social and economic issues.
- The document called Investing in Natural Capital was successfully launched at a joint HNF/Humber Environment Managers meet. Its role, of facilitating engagement with the Humber Local Economic Partnership is working. A meeting to discuss its recommendations is due.
- Leading on from the document above, working groups are to be set up to coordinate project development within the 17 key areas identified in the document.
- The next Annual Humber Conference takes place on 28 November. As usual it will be a half day event. Invites and agendas will be circulated in the next fortnight.
- The next joint HNF/Humber Environment Managers will take place on 4th October. Its main theme is Tertiary Containment of chemical spills.

4.17 DB Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS), University of Hull

DB noted that IECS staff are currently undertaking a number of ongoing bird surveys around the Humber in addition to fish monitoring in relation to existing managed realignment sites. The majority of DB's research at present is not within the Humber Estuary, but focussing more widely throughout the North Sea.

5. AOB and date of next meeting

PS noted that spoonbills bred somewhere near the Humber for the first time since the 16th century. 2 pairs arrived at Alkborough with 2 fledged young. A further pair bred at Fairburn Ings in Yorkshire.

Date of next meetings

Time and date	Presentation	Location
Wednesday 4 th October 2017	Joint HNF/Environment Managers meeting	Time and location TBC
Thursday 22 nd March 2018	HNF Meeting	10.00am location TBC
Thursday 26 th July 2018	HNF Site visit	Time and location TBC
Thursday 20 th September 2018	HNF Meeting	10.00am location TBC

DB thanked LR for a very valuable and informative talk. He also thanked the attendees and noted that it was the largest turn out for a Humber Nature Forum meeting for a number of years.

Notes produced by
Kevin Bayes 25 September 2017