

MINUTES OF THE LUNAN WATER MEETING - 19TH JULY 2016

PRESENT :

Professor A Werritty – Independent

Peter McPhail – Scottish Natural Heritage

Andrew McBride – Scottish Natural Heritage

Hugh Ingram – Balgavies Management Committee

Rab Potter – Scottish Wildlife trust

Alban Houghton – Convenor Balgavies Management Committee

Stuart McGowan – Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Laure Kuhfuss – James Hutton Institute

Marshall Halliday – Esk Salmon Fisheries Trust

Andy Vinten – James Hutton Institute

Janice Corrigan – Senior Engineer Angus Council Roads

1. INTRODUCTION

JC opened the meeting and welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. People were then invited to introduce themselves.

2. APOLOGIES

None were received

3. BACKGROUND

It was explained that this meeting was organised following a previous meeting between the Council and SNH to discuss the possibility of dredging works within the Rescobie/Balgavies reserve to reduce water levels in the vicinity and reduce flood risk to the B9113 at Clocksbriggs.

4. ANGUS COUNCIL ISSUES

Angus Council are concerned about the continued flooding of the B9113 at Clocksbriggs and also one of the properties at this location. It has been noted that the flooding events are part of an upward trend and solutions are being sought to the problem. The road was in danger of being closed a number of times over the December and January period last year and whilst there is a diversion available, this is a major route between Angus towns and cannot be subject to diversion for prolonged periods of time.

Angus Council has a duty to comply with the Nature Conservation Regulations in relation to project works that are proposed and this meeting will constitute formal consultation as part of this process if required.

5. SEPA ISSUES

SMcG explained that under the Water Framework Directive, waterbodies were expected to meet good ecological status between source and sea in a defined time period. He explained that the Lunan Water consisted of three waterbodies :-

- Moss – Rescobie
- Rescobie – Friockheim
- Friockheim – Sea

Comments below are based on the 2014 classification

The main water quality issues that SEPA are aware in the Moss – Rescobie , barriers to fish passage and low dissolved oxygen .

Rescobie - Friockheim is subject to downgrading for hydromorphology barriers to fish passage and dissolved oxygen .

Friockheim – Sea is defined as a highly modified water body so needs to achieve good ecological potential. Downgrading is due to total P, alien species and fish barrier

There are approx. 40 abstraction licences in the Lunan catchment

6. OTHER ISSUES

Previous flooding issue at Restenneth Moss were dealt with by a local farmer. This incident occurred when a railway culvert above Wemyss Farm blocked and hand dug maintenance was undertaken to clear. It should be noted that this culvert is not within the boundary of the SSSI.

Peter McPhail highlighted that he had had previous discussions regarding the construction of a core path within the nature reserve boundaries.

Marshall Halliday confirmed that ESRT had commissioned a report by Envirocentre into a number of issues on the Lunan Water.

SEPA advised that in general the water quality issues on the Lunan Water were caused by agricultural fertiliser inputs and the discharge of septic tank effluent in respect of phosphorous though the low dissolved oxygen levels were due to lack of reoxygenation through the moss and loch systems

SMcG confirmed that there are a number of SEPA sampling points for water quality and these are at the Lunan Well, Lunan inlet to Rescobie, Rescobie Loch at bankside, Balgavies Loch at inlet and the Lunan Water at Kirkton Mill.

7. JAMES HUTTON INSTITUTE

Andy Vinten explained the project proposal which is to install a tilting weir at the spillway at Milldens weir gates downstream of Balgavies. This will enable a wider range of potential levels than is currently the case. There is also the possibility of a small scale hydro scheme around the same location which could help to finance weir installation and management.

Andy Vinten explained that the institute had been aware of sub – catchment issues for 10 years. The fisheries interest has highlighted an issue with suspended solids pollution however this is not a water quality objective for SEPA. There has been no recent bathymetric survey of the loch and it was noted that the emergency overflow from the Lunanhead Pumping Station operated by Scottish Water discharged to a tributary of the Lunan. Stuart explained that a SEPA licence has been issued to Scottish Water for this pumping station and that the operation of the emergency overflow in extreme rainfall conditions was a licensed activity.

Marshall Halliday said that flow monitoring data has indicated that for the Lunan Water there has been a 30% increase in Q med flows.

JC asked SMcG about storage of abstracted flows by farmers and he explained that this had not been widely undertaken in this catchment and now there was no incentive in place in the SEPA charging scheme regarding winter abstraction. SEPA data return information on abstractions has indicated that approximately 50% of those farmers licensed to abstract are not actually making abstractions.

Rab Potter stated that farmers are increasing the amount of ditching that they are carrying out in the catchment as a method of protecting their farmland from future flooding.

Andy Vinten stated that catchment monitoring had been on going in the catchment for a number of years and this had created a quantity of data. Regular stakeholder meetings had indicated that water quality was low on the agenda with extreme flows both high and low being of more concern.

Bob Crabtree of WRC had prepared a report on economic drivers in relation to available volumes of water. Initial calculations had indicated that there was a deficit in the catchment of 20000m³ per year and that this equates to £100K.

Alban Houghton stated that had been aware of increasing water levels in the lochs for some time.

Andy Vinten mentioned the possibility of installing a micro hydro scheme to generate cash for the project.

Andy Vinten confirmed that the existing sluice gate at Milldens is managed by the farmer who owns the land at this location.

Andy Vinten explained the possibility of setting up a community interest company for the Lunan Water. He explained that this company can employ and the company can make a profit.

Andy Vinten highlighted availability of survey information at this location as an issue. JC to investigate within Angus Council to establish whether LIDAR data is available.

Peter McPhail then explained the SNH vision for the Rescobie and Balgavies reserve. He explained that they consist of lowland wetlands and there is nothing quite the same in Scotland as there is no contributing upland catchment in this location and the area contains plants of national importance.

Another source of funding that could be investigated for the project is Landfill Tax. JC to investigate within Angus Council regarding the potential for this.

8. SUMMARY

The hydrology of the current arrangement of the sluices at Milldens is complicated and any changes to the flow regime will require careful consideration and assessment of the potential impacts to the SSSI sites.

A future meeting is to be arranged for October. Suggested date is 22nd October at 11am.