Portsmouth Water excellence | respect | integrity	**Date of meeting:**	3 March 2022

Minutes from the Havant Thicket Reservoir Community Advisory Group

Meeting presentations / discussions	Actions

Attendees from Portsmouth Water:

- **Ruari Maybank (RM), Havant Thicket Reservoir Project Director, Portsmouth Water**
- **Eleanor Shipton (ES), Communications & Engagement Lead, Portsmouth Water**
- **Joel Hufford (JH), Senior Communications Consultant, Create 51.**
- **Jim Barker (JB), Head of Water Resources, Portsmouth Water**
- **Steve Holloway (SH), Health and Safety Manager for Havant Thicket Reservoir, Portsmouth Water**
- **Mark Tierney (MT), Project Manager for Havant Thicket Pipeline, Portsmouth Water**
- **Joanne Farrar (JF), Atkins**

Other attendees:

- **Ingrid Strawson (IS), Independent Chair of Havant Thicket Reservoir Strategic Advisory Group and Community Advisory Group.**

Stakeholder attendees:

- Jim Farrell, Friends of Staunton Country Park -
- Cllr Beryl Francis, Havant Borough Council
- Ron Hammerton, Horndean Protection Group
- Linda Jewell, British Horse Society
- Jane Smith, Forestry England
- Chris Stanley, Rowlands Castle Parish Council
- Dee Tupper, Friends of the Hermitage Stream
- Nick Eves, Southern Water
- Sam Underwood, Stakeholder Lead, Southern Water
- Chris Janes, Southern Water
- Mike Ashton, Cycling UK
- Peter Westron, Ramblers Association.
- Tim Speller, Hampshire County Council

Apologies:

- Cllr Jackie Branson, Havant Borough Council / Hampshire County Council
- Ella Capaldi, Park Community School
- Chris Anders, Park Community School

Welcome and Introductions

Ingrid Strawson, Independent Chair, opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

She then asked all attendees to introduce themselves in turn, before confirming that there were no further comments on the minutes from the previous meeting (30 November 2021) and so the minutes were agreed.

Ingrid then ran through the actions raised in the previous meeting and briefly explained how these had been responded to, including signposting where further information for each could be found in the Havant Thicket Reservoir Stakeholder Issues and Actions Log. A copy of the log had been circulated to stakeholder groups members prior to the meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Havant Thicket Reservoir project update

Please also see slides 5-19 in the attached PORTSMOUTH WATER presentation pack from the meeting.

Ingrid handed over to Ruari Maybank, Havant Thicket Reservoir Project Director, for an update on progress with the scheme.

Ruari first explained that the high-level timeline for the project is indicative at this stage, with a more developed schedule to be shared with the stakeholder advisory groups as soon as possible following the appointment of contractors.

Procurement of the contractors for Havant Thicket Reservoir is on schedule, with this area having been the main focus for Ruari and his team in the last couple of months, working towards the two main works contracts (for construction of the reservoir and its associated pipeline) being awarded in the spring.

One of the first tasks for the appointed contractors will be to develop the detailed designs / plans for the reservoir and pipeline. Of course, these updated designs / plans will be shared with the stakeholder groups for their information and feedback.

Ruari continued that the reservoir team are currently exploring, with the short-listed contractors, how to best ensure that all the necessary consents are in place to enable the trial reservoir embankment structure to be built this year.

Building the reservoir's Northern Access Route and making related improvements to the B2149 are planned to get underway and progress during 2022 also.

The process of translocating reptiles from the reservoir site and carrying out further ground investigations and archaeological investigations will also be getting underway in the coming weeks and months.

Ruari then introduced a number of new members of the reservoir project team, namely:

- **Pipeline Project Manager:** Mark Tierney, who joins from the Clancy Docwra Group, where he was the Southern Regional Construction Manager. He has 15 years' experience in capital delivery for water, wastewater and sewerage treatment projects, along with private sector and developer services pipeline projects in the Thames Valley and South of England regions
- **Health & Safety Manager:** Steve Holloway has more than 40 years' experience in safety of life, and over 25 years of experience in health and safety management in the construction sector, as both client and contractor. This was preceded by a British Army career, where he was a paramedic on a Combat Search and Rescue team. In recent years, he has worked with Thames Water, Southern Water and a number of Tier One contractors, leading health and safety for construction,

including significant earth moving, excavations, utility pipe-laying and street works. Steve is a hands-on health and safety leader and is a strong believer that visibility and positive engagement delivers results in culture and safety performance

- **Finance Manager:** Martin Goodman is an ACCA accountant and has worked in a range of industries from air traffic control at NATS, to nuclear warheads for the MOD, working on an Anglo-French nuclear programme.

A new Environmental Manager for the project is also due to be starting soon (later in March).

Next, Ruari provided an overview of the different plans which will provide more detail about how the reservoir project will protect and improve the environment. He explained that Atkins have been appointed to start work on this, so it can then be picked up by the appointed main works contractor.

In particular, how on-site biodiversity mitigation and compensation measures are implemented will be set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and the Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP). The Detailed Biodiversity Mitigation and Compensation Strategy will then detail further information, with an overview provided by the existing Outline Biodiversity Mitigation Compensation Strategy.

The LEMP covers the long-term management of habitat creation and enhancement. Along with the Detailed Biodiversity Mitigation and Compensation Strategy, this plan is currently being drafted by Atkins and will be finalised by the appointed contractor. While these documents are being finalised, work can be carried out under the Outline Mitigation and Compensation Strategy.

The CEMP will be prepared for the scheme by the principal reservoir contractor, once appointed. It will be a 'live' document maintained throughout the construction phases of the scheme. This document will include details of how ecological mitigation measures will be implemented.

Next, came an update on finalising the site for 80-hectares of wood pasture creation, as part of the overall total of 200-hectares of woodland and grassland creation / restoration, which will be delivered under the reservoir plan.

The available locations (shortlist of two) are being reviewed and evaluated, focusing on which landowner can support the best outcome. This work will be completed in the summer, to allow time to finalise the contract and land agreement ahead of the winter planting season. The landowner will then be able to commence work in Winter 2022.

A meeting was held on 10 February 2022 to review plans for the above 80-hectare wood pasture creation and the Southleigh Forest Woodland Management Plan (a further part of the above 200-hectares total). This involved representatives from Natural England, the Forestry Commission, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Hampshire County Council.

The Southleigh Forest plan received positive feedback, with people satisfied it will deliver the desired compensation, as set out in the Outline Biodiversity Mitigation and Compensation Strategy and the reservoir project's European Protected Species licence for bats. Once updated, the plan will be submitted to the Forestry Commission for approval to ensure it meets UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) management planning criteria. It will also be presented to the Environment Stakeholder Subgroup for more detailed discussion. After it has been finalised, it will need to be updated every 10 years.

As part of the Havant Thicket Reservoir project, Forestry England have been carrying out work in areas of Havant Thicket woodland to restore and create new habitats. This involves opening up areas to make them lighter and give more space for native trees to grow, providing greater diversity in tree species.

This will increase biodiversity in the woodland, improving the habitat for local wildlife, including reptiles, bats, dormice and birds. Forestry England have delivered the works in accordance with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS), which addresses all aspects of biodiversity and environmental protection, as well as sustainable forest management.

Measures are also being taken to ensure that reptiles are not harmed and that animals are not present within the reservoir development area during construction works. Grassland on the reservoir site is being grazed more heavily to reduce the height of the grass and make it less suitable for reptiles. As this area becomes less suitable, it is important that new habitats are provided. Management of a section of birch dominated woodland, and an associated stream corridor immediately to the north of the reservoir site in Havant Thicket woodland, has been completed to provide enhanced habitats for reptiles to disperse into.

Given the high numbers of reptiles within parts of the reservoir site, it is likely that reptiles will also need to be translocated to alternative, local habitats. All translocation works will be undertaken in the reptile active season, which runs from April to October.

In the long term, the advance planting on Gypsies Plain and at Memory Park will provide excellent woodland edge habitat for reptiles. Two new ephemeral ponds were dug within Gypsies Plain in early 2019 and reptile hibernacula (underground chambers that amphibians and reptiles use throughout the winter to protect themselves from the cold) are being installed adjacent to them. It is anticipated that the wetland habitat created along northern edge of the reservoir will also provide suitable habitat for reptiles, particularly Grass Snake and Adder.

The receptor sites in Havant Thicket woodland will provide adequate capacity to receive reptiles from the reservoir site. As part of the development of the reservoir, habitat around the perimeter of the reservoir will be managed for reptiles.

Work is also underway to ensure no badgers are on site when construction work is happening. A potential badger sett was located, with a zone created around the area to protect the potential sett during works by our ecology team. To confirm the current status of these entrance holes, a motion-activated wildlife surveillance camera was installed to monitor the level of usage and the species using the holes.

Given that the subsidiary sett is seasonally active, construction work has the potential to harm badgers occupying the sett. Without closure, the sett entrances would be destroyed by the construction and, unmitigated, this could result in the entrapment or injury of badgers. To mitigate this, it will be necessary to close the badger sett under licence from Natural England. The sett will only be closed, once it is confirmed that it is no longer in use. Closure of badger setts is restricted to the period between July and November, when badgers are not breeding.

Portsmouth Water is supporting local volunteers to relocate around 300 saplings from within the Avenue (on the reservoir site) to be grown, ready for use on the site and for the benefit of other local developments.

Volunteers have been / are visiting the site during February and March to carry out the relocation work. The saplings are being planted in compostable pots and temporarily homed in the Phase 1 tree planting area at Gypsies Plain.

An additional sapling nursery is also being created within this area. This will comprise around 200 tree saplings, which were grown from seeds gathered on site, including in the Avenue.

Ruari thanked everyone who attended the reservoir Northern Access Route workshop held for stakeholders on 19 January. A feedback report from the session has been sent out with any final comments requested by 4 March 2022.

During the workshop, the reservoir team shared their environmentally led approach, design principles and how the local environment such as trees, ecological, heritage and access considerations are influencing the design development. Also discussed were the advantages and disadvantages of dig, no dig and a combination of dig/no dig options being considered to build the access road.

It's now been resolved to develop a dig and no dig design as the optimum solution, to minimise the construction and operational footprint of the new road.

Since the workshop, the team has been working closely with the landscape architect, ecologist, tree specialist and drainage engineer for the scheme, to consider:

- Further refinement of the route's alignment, to help reduce its gradient and impact on trees
- Materials and finishes to retain the rural character of the woodland setting
- Location, extent, function, type and species of new planting to integrate and connect with existing habitat, and manage access
- Design of the crossing point for multi-user access (such walkers and cyclist) to and from Horndean.

Ruari then updated attendees on the diversion of the bridleway running east to west across the reservoir site. There will be a temporary diversion during the reservoir's construction, with the diversion then becoming permanent. Ruari shared a map of the proposed diversion (see slide 17), which is subject to further updating in light of feedback from stakeholders including Hampshire County Council. This shows the reservoir site where it meets the corner of Swanmore Road. The existing bridleway is marked by the black line. The alternative bridleway is shown in red on the map.

In April 2022, some tree removal is planned along the Northern Access Route and B2149. Other trees on site will be inspected for bat potential and any features that bats can inhabit will be removed. This requires a slight amendment to our European Protected Species licences, as our first licence does not include this work. This is because the detailed design was not complete for the works on the junction and access road at this time.

The work is timed to ensure no hibernating bats are disturbed. Measures will also be in place to protect birds and to ensure no nests are present. Our ecologists will check the canopy of the trees, looking at where bats could be in residence.

The next phase of main site clearance work will also be taking place in September and October 2022. This will involve finishing clearing the main reservoir site.

Finally, Ruari talked about Portsmouth Water recently signing an agreement with the University of Portsmouth, setting out how the two organisations will collaborate on upcoming initiatives including student exchanges, the development of new academic programmes and joint research activities.

This will allow University students to benefit from Portsmouth Water's expertise, and for Portsmouth Water, the partnership will bring new opportunities for research, innovation and collaboration with some of the area's leading academics. This is an exciting opportunity for both organisations as the Havant Thicket Reservoir project progresses.

The University of Portsmouth will support innovation in design with our contractors and they will support in performance monitoring and analysis on behalf of Portsmouth Water. Portsmouth Water will be offering site visits to university students and faculty members. Together, the two organisations will be delivering a learning legacy for the project. The university will play a key role in engaging with professional institutions and compiling research papers.

Q&A section

Question: Can Portsmouth Water confirm that none of the footpaths on the 80-hectare site (for wood pasture creation) will be removed?

Answer: This will form part of the evaluation of each potential scheme. The schemes will be looked at in terms of environmental benefits and recreational routes. Ruari Maybank confirmed he was not aware of any impact on footpaths, but that this will be covered in the evaluation.

Question: There are at least two areas of archaeological interest that will be lost as a result of the reservoir. This is understood, but the Friends of Staunton Country Park would like to be involved and receive information about any archaeological work.

Answer: Ruari Maybank confirmed that Portsmouth Water would be very happy to share details of archaeological plans. The appointed reservoir construction contractor will need to present the detail of their construction and ground investigation plans and discuss these with the Hampshire County archaeologist.

Question: Can more detail be provided about the trial reservoir embankment?

Answer: The trial embankment, which will be temporary, will be designed by the appointed contractor and built above ground on an area on the west of the reservoir site. It will be constructed near to where the permanent embankment will be located. It will be roughly 100 metres long 20 meters wide and 8-10 metres high and will be made predominantly with local materials, including London Clay and Reading Clay. It will be important to see how the trial embankment performs over a period of six months. As the contractor hasn't been appointed yet, there isn't a definitive timescale for the work to take place.

Question: How will construction materials be brought onto site?

Answer: Portsmouth Water has been in discussions with the local highways authority (Hampshire Country Council). The general principal is to use light vehicles at the Swanmore Road (western) side of the reservoir site. Tilhill, the contractors looking after tree removal, have already created a compound there. In terms of the trial embankment, the preference would be to use the reservoir's Northern Access Route (off the B2149 on the north eastern edge of the reservoir site). However, there may be a need for further discussions with Forestry England colleagues about limited access to the existing logging route. At the moment, this is a high-level strategic plan and it is something that will be discussed with the contractor once they're appointed.

Agenda Item 2: Future water resources planning update

Please also see slides 2-9 in the attached SOUTHERN WATER presentation pack from the meeting.

Independent Chair Ingrid Strawson handed over to Joel Hufford, who was providing an update on behalf of Jim Barker, Head of Water Resources at Portsmouth Water.

Joel explained the importance of the wider context of long-term water resource planning for the Havant Thicket Reservoir scheme – both in terms of what has already been granted planning permission and potential enhanced future uses for the reservoir that are being explored as part of the normal five-yearly planning cycle for the water industry.

Jim Barker is offering to provide a separate briefing for any interested stakeholders on the water resources planning process – from national water resources planning guidance, to the developing regional plan for the South East and individual water company Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs). People were requested to sign up in the post-meeting note sent to all group members following the session.

ACTION: Stakeholder group members to sign up for briefing on water resources planning.

This led on to an update from Southern Water, on enhanced potential future uses for the reservoir.

Sam Underwood, Stakeholder & Engagement Manager for Southern Water's 'Water for Life Hampshire' programme, reminded attendees of the detail of the company's updated water resources proposals for the county – these will help secure future water supplies for customers, while protecting the sensitive chalk stream eco-systems of the River Test and the River Itchen, by enabling less water to be taken from them.

The proposals, which were submitted to the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID) on 6 December 2021, centre on topping up Havant Thicket Reservoir with recycled water, during periods of drought (to supplement the water from Bedhampton Springs that will make up most of the water in the reservoir), as well as installing a new pipeline to transfer water from the reservoir to Southern Water's Otterbourne Water Supply Works near Winchester. The original proposal to build a desalination plant at Fawley to the west of Southampton is not now being pursued.

Sam talked about the importance to engaging with customers, stakeholders and the wider public on the issue of water recycling, including via detailed customer research. He then introduced his colleague Nick Eves, Head of Customer Insight at Southern Water.

Nick discussed the findings from detailed discussions with customers on water recycling, with people regarding it as a good option for the future, especially younger audiences. This because they see it as addressing the 'root cause' of water scarcity, with a combination of solutions working together seen as being needed.

Sam then updated attendees on next steps, with Ofwat's final decision on the (above) updated proposals for enhanced future uses of Havant Thicket Reservoir set to be published on 17 May 2022. An update about what this says will be issued to stakeholder group members very soon after.

Subject to Ofwat's determination, the plans will be subject to further engagement, consultation and planning applications, with a consultation to be held in the summer, and another to follow early next year.

Southern Water's submissions to RAPID can be viewed in the Technical Documents section of the *Water for Life – Hampshire* webpages www.southernwater.co.uk/water-for-life-hampshire

Q&A section

Question: If the reservoir will be topped up by recycled water, how will that impact possible recreational use of the site, particularly activities on or near the water?

Answer: Recycled water is purified water. The treatment process strips out virtually all impurities, so the recycled water would be cleaner than the water already in the reservoir. On this basis, no impact on potential recreational activity is envisaged. A reminder that large-scale water sports is not included in the recreational plan for the site. That said, a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out on the proposals for potential enhanced uses of Havant Thicket Reservoir.

Under the proposals, up to 15 million litres of purified recycled water would enter the reservoir during periods of water shortages due to drought. A reminder that the reservoir's overall maximum capacity will be 8.7 billion litres, with water levels potentially falling during a prolonged drought. A detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out on the proposals.

While the above approach is being developed for use in droughts, industry experience of water recycling plants elsewhere in the world shows that the facility will need to be kept "ticking over" to ensure it is ready for use, that the membranes do not dry out and that the associated pipelines remain clean. This "sweetening flow", as it is called, will mean a smaller amount of recycled water being fed into the reservoir on a daily basis. This is being explored in more detail as part of Southern Water's developing plans and will be subject to further engagement and consultation.

Agenda Item 3: Havant Thicket Reservoir Subgroup update

Please also see slide 24-27 in the attached PORTSMOUTH WATER presentation pack from the meeting.

Joel Hufford from the Havant Thicket Reservoir Communications and Engagement team provided an update on progress with the new Stakeholder Subgroups. These are being established to enable the reservoir project team to engage with interested stakeholders on particular topics, such as the environment, recreation and the reservoir pipeline, so that stakeholders can explore these issues in greater depth and help further shape the reservoir scheme's planning and delivery.

A meeting was held with the volunteer Subgroup Chairs on 16 February 2022, which focused on discussing an over-arching draft Terms of Reference for the groups, ways of working and next steps leading to each group holding an initial meeting in April. These first sessions will focus on drawing up a work plan for each group for the coming year.

Once more developed, the draft Subgroups Terms of Reference will be shared with the main stakeholder groups members, with the Subgroup Chairs now working to contact people who have volunteered to be subgroup members, or who have been suggested as possible members, to agree a date / time for a first full meeting of each group. Each subgroup will report on its work to the main stakeholder groups at least twice a year.

Ingrid Strawson thanked Joel for carrying this forward and for the progress made.

Agenda Item 5: AOB

Ingrid explained that the next Interim meeting is scheduled for 12 April 2022 and the next Community Advisory Group will be on Wednesday 25 May 2022.

Ingrid asked whether there would be any objections to only holding these meeting online, via MS Teams, in future. There were no objections.

Question: Is there any update on the bridleway diversion (for the route running across the reservoir site)? When will a new diversion order be published?

Answer: This will be discussed via the Access Stakeholder Subgroup, with work on the diversion proposals paused to enable stakeholders to help shape the updated diversion application

Comment on improving connectivity of cycle routes around reservoir site and wider surrounding area

Answer: There will be an opportunity to raise and discuss this, and other points, via the new Access Stakeholder Subgroup.

Meeting close

Ingrid Strawson closed the session by thanking everyone for attending and for their contributions.

PLEASE SEE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS FROM MEETING BELOW

Meeting actions

Action	Owner	Date to be completed
Stakeholder group members to sign up for the briefing on water resources planning by Jim Barker	Stakeholder group members	By 31 March 2022