

Natural Cambridgeshire Partnership Forum – Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 17 June – 10.00 -12.30

Venue – Video Conference

Invited attendees:

Cameron Adams (CA) - Environment Agency	Sir David King (DS) - Former Chief Scientist
Richard Astle (RA) - Natural Cambridgeshire	Linda King (LK) - ARU
Ros Aveling (RoA) - Fauna & Flora International	Peter Landshoff (PL) - Natural Cambridgeshire
Julia Beeden (JB) - Cambridgeshire County Council	Carly Leonard (CL) - PECT
Guy Belcher (GB) - Cambridge City Council	James Littlewood (JL) - CambridgePPF
Chris Bowden (CB) - Natural Cambridgeshire	Roger Mitchell (RM) - Natural Cambridgeshire
Matthew Bradbury (MB) - Nene Park Trust	Stuart Morris (SM) - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
Stephen Briggs (SB) - UN Global Climate Observing System	Urselle Mumford (UM) - Environment Agency
Clare Bond (CB) - Hunts DC	Cllr Lina Nieto (Cllr LN) - Cambridgeshire County Council
Rachel Brooks (RB) - Country Landowners Association	Mark Nokkert (MN) - Cambridgeshire ACRE
Matthew Bullock (MB) - Cambridge Ahead	Robin Price (RP) - Water Resources East
Cllr Martin Cahn (Cllr MC) - South Cambs DC	Daniel Pullan (DP) – RSPB
Adrian Cannard (AC) - Combined Authority	Allan Simpson (AS) – Anglian Water
Daniel Clark (DC) - Cambridge Water	Emily Shuckburgh (ES) - Cambridge Zero
Phil Clark (PC) - Cambridgeshire County Council	Cllr Bridget Smith (Cllr BS) - South Cambs DC
Anthony Cooper (AC) - CambridgePPF	Sarah Smith (SS) - National Trust
Nigel Cooper (NC) - ARU	Cllr Katie Thornburrow (Cllr KT) - Cambridge City Council
Charles Crawford (CC) - LDA design	Stephen Tomkins (ST) - Cam Valley Forum
Humphrey Crick (HC) - Natural England	John Torlesse (JT) - Natural England
Stuart Dawks (SD) - PECT	Richard Townley (RT) - Fulbourn Manor Estate
Sarah Ferris (SF) - Cambridgeshire County Council	Sean Traverse-Healy (STH) - CPRE
Bridget Fox (BF) - Woodland Trust	Cllr Irene Walsh (Cllr IW) - Peterborough City Council
Iain Green (IG) - Cambridgeshire County Council	Hannah Ward (HW) - RSPB
Jane Green (JG) - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning	Catherine Weightman (CW) - Natural England
Cllr Pippa Heylings (Cllr PH) - South Cambs DC	Rob Wise (RW) - NFU
Richard Kay (RK) - Peterborough City Council	

Actions

	Action	Owner
1	RA to send ES details of Steve Cox and Manchester Festival of Nature	RA
2	MK to share details of Biosphere with ES	MK
3	ES to share her contact details to link with JB and CCC	ES
4	All – Review the report: Let it flow https://camvalleyforum.uk/publication-let-it-flow/ and support the recommendations of the Cam Valley Forum on rescuing the aquifer Help Water Resources East to promote a rethink of water resources and usage, in particular to take forward the visions for Fenland, https://www.fensforthefuture.org.uk/	ALL

5	LNP – Co signature on the letter on Cam valley – RA to sign on behalf of LNP.	RA
6	JT – to co-ordinate LNP review of evidence for the water cycle study in the Greater Cambridge Local plan.	JT
7	All to feedback to JB on CCC peat activity with a view to supporting the County Council to promote soil and Fenland peat conservation	ALL
8	All to feedback to Cllr PH at South Cambs on providing input to forthcoming strategies	ALL
9	RA – to co-ordinate one submission to the Climate Change Commission on behalf of NC	RA
10	All to seek financial contributions for NC	ALL
11	BS to share Natures Arc information	BS
12	RA – To share Doubling Nature Investment Plan briefing report. All to read.	RA
13	<p>Overarching actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a change of culture, towards eco-civilisation and realisation of the importance of nature to the economy. • Encourage tree planting where appropriate, throughout the County, and the construction of timber buildings so as to lock carbon. • Help farmers rebuild soil nitrogen and carbon by moving towards using compost rather than fertiliser, with advice on the economics of improving their practices and preparing for the best approach to ELMS. Seek advice from the universities, NIAB and others and cooperate with the County Council. • Promote a serious rethink of land use, with nature at the beginning of the process, while recognising that compromise may be needed. Identify land in the County that should be protected. • Engage with the Arc Universities Group, arcuniversities.co.uk, to support innovation. <p>Actions from previous meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the impact of the proposed Biosphere on local plans – <i>Jane Green Meet with Biosphere – To be discussed at a later stage.</i> • Promote the Naturally Healthy agenda and engage with the Health and Wellbeing Board – <i>Cameron Adams</i> • Work with developers to enhance nature either on site or through offsets – <i>Cameron Adams</i> • Consider how best to engage with farmers and other landowners, and help them get better returns from their investments – <i>Rob Wise</i> • Host a Green Summit – <i>Bridget Smith, Adrian Cannard</i> • Collaborate with Natural Capital East – <i>Cameron Adams</i> • Review progress of Doubling Nature at end 2020 – <i>Richard Astle</i> 	

Date of next meeting: 10am on Wednesday 16 September

Item	Discussion
1	<p>Natural Cambridgeshire update <i>Richard Astle, Natural Cambridgeshire</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome from RA • Update on NC. Establishment of Natural Cambridgeshire (NC) as a legal entity. This will be a Charitable interest Organisation (CIO) with Trustees • Trustees will come from the existing NC Executive Board with the opportunity for 4 places from this group – the ‘Partnership Forum’ • The Partnership forum is a merge of the Natural Cambridgeshire Board and the Planning and Policy Forum. There is no restriction on membership of the forum. It is intended that it will meet quarterly • COVID19 has highlighted the importance of nature and green open space to society • PECT have been commissioned to undertake some consultancy work. This includes work on governance, communications and the Doubling Nature pledge. This links to the work underway on the Doubling Nature Investment Plan being taken forward by CA and CB • The Combined Authority has set up an Independent Climate Change Commission to be chaired by Baroness Brown • Landscape scale work underway on the long term management of green space across the area, including on the Biosphere and the Future Parks Accelerator.
2	<p>Cambridge Zero <i>Dr Emily Shuckburgh, Cambridge University</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Cambridge initiative – Enhance university activity around climate change. • Cambridge Zero launched at the end of 2019. • 4 pillars of work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research – 6 thematic reserch areas – visit website (https://www.zero.cam.ac.uk/) for more information. Working closely with Cambridge Conservation Initiative. Looking at large research topics which haven’t been brought together before • Education – with Partners Cambridge University Press and Cambridge Assessment reviewing the long term education content from primary through to university • Engagement – With business and industries. Looking to support decarbonisation and develop policy at a local and national level. This includes the set up of the Cambridge Zero policy forum with a focus on green recovery. Also seeking to engage with schools and the general public. Planning a climate change festival as an annual activity. This year likely to be in November and possibly virtual. • Decarbonisation of the University – Within the city and region. Develop the University Estate. Focus on biodiversity as well as decarbonisation. • Delivery of Zero carbon requires action at a local level – supported by the evidence base <p>Questions/Comments</p>

- *RA - Local Resilience Forum – Steve Cox at CCC is heading up work on Green Recovery. RA to send ES details.*
- *RW – What level of progress is being made with discussions with the colleges? ES – University and colleges being looked at together. The college has large land holdings, how they could be brought into the solutions*
- *Cllr IW – Interested in Carbon capture and potential changes to farming methods. ES – Soil and farming practices can play a significant part. Policy workshop held. A complex area. Soils holds a large amount of carbon and balancing the different needs is challenging. Positive interaction from Farming community.*
- *RA – Are you aware of the Manchester Festival of Nature? RA to share details.*
- *NC – ARU - Are you engaging with Anglia Ruskin University. ES – Yes, main contact is Aled Jones – Director of the Global Sustainability Institute. Happy to explore joint activities.*
- *MK– Will share information on the Biosphere with ES*
- *JB – How do we tie in the work with the County Council? ES will share the best contact details*
- *PL – Had meetings with the colleges previously and had difficulty in moving things forward. Met with Richard Antony, Bursar for Jesus College. ES – a Sub committee involving Bursars has been formed with John Dicks from Darwin college*
- *MB – Has met with Richard Antony linked to WildlifeTrust and nature recovery networks around university and estates.*

Actions

- **RA to send ES details of Steve Cox and Manchester Festival of Nature**
- **MK to share details of Biosphere with ES**
- **ES to share contact details to link in with JB and CCC**

3

How can improving the natural environment help with climate change?

Professor Sir David King, former government Chief Scientist

Professor Stephen Briggs, chair of the UN Global Climate Observing System Steering Committee

Sir David King heads the Centre for Climate Repair – under the Cambridge Zero research area. We are already seeing double the double levels of GHG to pre industrial times in parts per million (ppm). Need to be planning for 1m sea level rise by the end of the century. Huge variability in this depending on scenarios and mitigation measures.

The Centre for Climate Repair has three objectives:

1. Deep and rapid emissions reduction (especially methane levels – demand for livestock and rice)
2. GHG removal
3. Find the technology to help refreeze the Arctic and Himalayas

Working to form a Global Climate Alliance. Improving the natural environment is a focus. Linked issues of eco system fragility, resource depletion, species extinction and climate change driven, in part, by global population increase.

All has impact on eco systems. This is a cultural challenge. The traditional values of the East have a respect for life at their heart. The Western way of life has developed rampant consumerism which is driving forward the challenges. However, change is happening - in China in 2012 the Communist party introduced clause around the scientific mode of development – ‘Eco civilisations’. This requires that eco system wellbeing is managed alongside human wellbeing.

- GHG removal options:
 1. Tree planting - try to recover natural forest and maintain
 2. Managed forest – more consumption of wood in permanent form. Construction with wood needs to become the norm.

GHG removal – The UK government is supporting 5 projects with 5 universities selected. Cambridge hoping to be the hub overseeing them. One will be around tree planting and carbon content of soil.

Higher levels of carbon in soil are needed, but this doesn't always align with farming practices. A long term experiment in Africa to test out composting against chemical farming practices showed that similar yields were possible over a 5 year period. However, during water stress, the composted crops were 99% more successful due to water retention. Unfortunately the costs are prohibitive under normal circumstances. We need regenerative land management. A culture that recognises that the natural world is critically important.

Questions/Comments

- *SB – Climate Observing System (GCOS) Observe and quantify climate observation for climate modelling*
- *Climate is so fundamental. Of the 17 SDGs, 13 are directly linked to climate. World Economic Forum – Severe risks have been climate change related. Blackrock Investment – Industry and finance systems are starting to listen. Defence and security also now understand the implications of climate change*
- *GCOS:*
 1. *Science – provide observations to model climate*
 2. *Adaption – taking the IPCC and looking at local issues. What are the consequences of climate change. Impact becomes local, downscale model in time and space to look at regional outcomes and local system, social economic systems, to provide the changes of the ground. Centre for AI and environmental risk – Climate impact on broader society including biodiversity*
 3. *Emissions – how do we manage at a national and local scales.*
- *What observations are needed. How do we make them accessible and in the right conditions?*
- *Humphrey Crick from Natural England and Tom Lovejoy of Cambridge Conservation Initiative looking at large scale habitat restoration with potential to draw 65 part per million of GHG. Everyone can contribute to habitat restoration through trees in their own gardens as well as Government and NGO initiatives. Links to Doubling Nature*
- *RW – Farming as an industry is in a different place. The farming community has a thirst for knowledge and soil health and increase carbon is an objective for landowners. Farmers are actively engaged in this through looking at compost, cover crops, rebuilding soil nitrogen and soil carbon to get back to higher levels with annual soil testing*
- *JT – Philosophical frame very interesting. Discussions are taking place with Treasury on referencing the way nature is linked to the economy. Biosphere is key - in the fens we host considerable levels of carbon. Suitable land management practices can secure net zero but also nature reserve goals. Defra – looking at peat and peat strategy with a lowland task force*
- *CA - The Independent Commission for Climate Change has been set up by the Combined Authority with Baroness Julia Brown as Chair. Currently appointing the commissioners and a working group. Public evidence period during the summer*
- *DK – Agrees that many farmers do understand the implications and are supportive of change, However, there is a long way to go on farming. The 8-year experiments in Africa with*

composting vs chemicals ended up with farmers reverting back to previous practice. Dasgupta Review raises many questions. With a mathematical model can we achieve the results or is it the culture. We need to change our cultural thinking and in our subconscious

- *SB – Overarching point – Evident any approach needs to be holistic, commercial resource management, sustainability*
- *RA - FFI – Forum brings across all types of organisations and sectors. Need to move from rhetoric to reality. Move more quickly to get decisions about land use. The opportunities are being lost and biodiversity and natural areas come too far down the list*
- *MB – The key landscape areas around Cambridge generally don't clash with the opportunities for development. Looking to find ways to live in harmony for balance and quality of life. Need to interact with nature and not see ourselves as separate from it*
- *Cllr BS – Mapping the natural assets and work around them for the OxCam Arc. Always difficult around transport and infrastructure / natural environment conflict. Public transport links are important as is modal shift to get people out. Strong local plans are needed.*
- *Cllr PH – The reality is that it is a low priority in many of the strategies. However, moving forward now with doubling nature pledge. The evidence being considered for local plans is already 3-4 years out of date before it comes to approval and decision making. What do we do in the interim? The Biosphere has potential but needs to get buy in and it doesn't currently have it. Positive about Cambridge Zero integration between the science, practice and policy. It then needs bringing into the planning system.*
- *RA – be good to see some significant action on the ground.*
- *DK – We are all learning that it's possible to operate in a different way. For example the number of webinar meetings during lockdown. Communicating around the world and saving on traveling and downtime. Increasing productivity and reducing the need for transport into the future. If the plan was 5 years ago, we need to think again. Need to ensure that any infrastructure is fit for purpose for the middle of century and beyond, otherwise we will create stranded assets.*

4

Water Resources

Stephen Tomkins, Cam Valley Forum

ST – Working with Richard Townley. The Cam Valley Forum <https://camvalleyforum.uk/> have been working on the issue of over abstraction from the River Cam. The summary document '[Let it flow](#)' details the issues and proposals.

Issue of over abstraction from the River Cam. Thanks to PL for giving a voice. Working with OFWAT to increase their mandate to look after the environment and value of water. Invited to join Robin Price – WRE – identified the abuse of the aquifer. Research group formed to look into the issue. Thanks to the EA for the access to their information.

Work on trying to saving chalk streams. Includes the following issues:

- Ground water abstraction has significant impact on the flow
- Low flow impact and sewage and agriculture pollutants have contributed to poor environment status
- Habitat modifications have not helped the river
- Water abstraction licences to be reviewed by the government.

The report contains seven main areas to protect and restore the River Cam:

<https://camvalleyforum.uk/publication-let-it-flow/>

RP - Well done to the CVF. It is a rigorous and scientific document. WRE are looking at landscape and long term water management for eastern England and chalk streams.

There is a need for short, medium and long term actions. We need to use less water. Covid has increased water use by 20-30% during lockdown.

Medium term – House building and the Arc. Water efficient homes construction. Long term – efficient reuse and thinking about public supply differently. Fenland Future work underway with Anglian Water.

Questions/Comments

- *JT (NE) – Water cycle study for the greater Cambridge local plan. Evidence work for LNP to review and potentially comment. Extra growth impacts – NE believe some of their sites are being impacted by water abstraction unless measures are address on how growth will impact on the area.*
- *JB – Abstraction reduction will have an impact on the flood risk. Needs to be considered.*
- *AS – Anglian Water have a 2030 net zero target. Article changed to have a public interest. Background in growth and planting – Water smart communities. Integrated community. National policy to get a higher water efficiency target. 110 litres per a day. How can we get the development community on board for a higher standard.*

Actions

- **All – Review the report: Let it flow: <https://camvalleyforum.uk/publication-let-it-flow/>**
- **LNP – Co signature on the letter on Cam valley, Cambridge water to Mr powell on S/M/Long term actions – RA to sign on behalf of LNP.**
- **JT – to co-ordinate LNP review of evidence for the water cycle study in the Greater Cambridge Local plan.**

5

Fenland Peat

Matthew Bullock, Cambridge University

The overall economy of Cambridgeshire has a £2.56 billion turnover with over 280k employees. Agriculture, including packing and food preparation, matters a great deal to the economy in this area. The issue of peat is not yet on the political agenda at a county level. There are huge variations across the area for health and education outcomes, particularly in the areas of Peterborough and South Fenland where there are higher levels of deprivation. What is the absorptive capacity for innovation for the area?

<https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/cambridge-researchers-advise-county-council-on-net-zero-policy-actions>

Over a six-month period from March to September 2019, two teams of researchers from Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE) investigated questions on Cambridgeshire’s carbon footprint raised by the council, and provided evidence-based

recommendations on how to adapt policies in order to deliver the county's decarbonisation goals.

The [CUPSE Report](#) identified those areas of the economy that need to be address to get to net Zero. Reducing emissions from the current 6.1 million tonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per year to zero.

- Domestic homes contribute 1280 thousand tonnes (kt) of CO₂e or 21% of current emissions
- Transport accounts for 39% of emissions
- Agriculture currently contributes 405.5 kt CO₂e per year, or 7% of emissions
- Commercial Services and Industrial emissions account for 27% of current emissions
- Waste management contributes around 2% of emissions
- Afforestation as a means to reduce net emissions has been explored extensively. Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) currently account for 4% of emissions
- Peatland emissions are not currently counted in the emissions inventory, but could significantly affect Cambridgeshire's reported emissions - increasing them by as much as 90%. Whilst this is technically just a change in accounting, it does highlight the need for further investigation.

It is estimated that in the Great Fen 2cm of lowland peat is lost per annum. Unsustainable farming in such habitats needs to be stopped. What are the mitigations? Ways to rewet peak land to stop the erosion. Current system allows payment for planting for carbon mitigation but these equate to approximately £45 per acre per an annum to supress carbon emissions compared to £800-1000 for onions and high value vegetables. Short term benefit versus long-term benefit. A real term agriculture economy and risk for the community. NIAB are looking at what alternative technology and agriculture could be included.

Questions/comments

- *Cllr MC – The big change of the natural environment in the area has been agriculture. Outside planning system and not something local authority has control over. How do we double nature? How do we take the land out of agriculture and the resource to do it and buy the land. Will need to be done together. Local authority would need to get other stakeholders to work together*
- *JB – CCC peat discussion has been flagged and it is estimated between a 50%-90% figure, but still staggering all the same. Briefing been undertaken with MP Steven Barclay. CCC is a significant landowners and rural estate*
- *RW - Peat figures are out of date and need to be refined*
- *JB - CCC will be contributing to Defra and lowland peat measurement and are engaged with NE on this. Lot of core data from other infrastructure projects. CCC looking for partners to work with CCC on. Working with farmers on farming strategy – not just on peat but biodiversity, flood risk and being a more helpful landlord*
- *SF – Confirmation that the final CCC strategy is now in place – the forth corporate objective is net zero by 2050. CCC also has a £16m environment fund now in the implementation phase.*
- *RW – To reiterate that at a county level it is on the agenda of the farming community. BEIS commissioned a large piece of work. Defra commissioned major work on measuring peat land extent including lowland peat in the fens. Give a better understanding. CUPSE report – questioning if in the UN reporting in a consistent way. NFU net zero ambition by 2040 target does acknowledge the role that land use role can play and how seriously it is being taken*

- *MB – Profitability of fenland is part of the issue. £3billion for the whole fenland is a huge amount. Carbon sequestration versus profitability. The profitability will disappear in a generation or two unless farming methods adapt over the years*
- *JT (NE) – Highly profitable area, it will change as the agriculture support system changes. Need to look at environmental land management system can provide us in the future, including paludiculture.*
- *Cllr PH – South Cambs has a zero carbon strategy and are about to start on biodiversity and natural capital strategy – Invitation for all to help support and input into it*
- *RA - As a partnership we should be making one strong submission to the Climate Change Commission. How do we get onto the delivery scale?*
- *RA - We have zero resources – Budget of £8k in total. We have written to all local authorities with very little response. Goodwill of a few including Peter and RA. Budgets of a few thousand. Lots of feedback that this is a helpful forum but this needs to translate to financial support if people want it to continue.*

Actions

- **All to feedback to JB on CCC peat activity**
- **All to feedback to PH at SC on forthcoming strategies**
- **RA – to co-ordinate one submission to the Climate Change Commission on behalf of NC**
- **All to seek financial contributions for NC**

6

CamOx Arc

*Cllr Bridget Smith, South Cambs DC
Chris Bowden, Natural Cambridgeshire*

Cllr BS - Lead for the environment on the OxCam Arc – Governance arranged. Executive board created. CxCam has been branded at the green Arc. An opportunity for it to be internationally significant as setting the highest green standard for building, infrastructure and establishing a green manufacturing and research industry. East West railway – no decision at present on if it is going to electric. Route for railway not been announced. Likely development around Cambourne.

Arc University group website launched – opportunity to capture innovation. Use Arc as a test bed. Natures Arc (look to be shared). To share.

Actions

- **BS to share Natures Arc information**

7

Natural capital investment plan

*Cameron Adams, Environment Agency
Chris Bowden, Natural Cambridgeshire*

CA – endorse Stevens comments about abstraction. Collaborative approach - as consumers of water we all play our part. CA is on part time secondment with Combined Authority. Working on a LIFE bid for doubling nature. Lots of interest from partners on the proposal. Combined Authority to be the lead for the project. Timeline – 16th July for concept note. Very encouraging feedback.

CB – With CA working on the Doubling Nature Investment Plan. Have written a scoping study which was funded by Defra as part of the OxCam Arc work. Doubling Nature vision was launched by the LNP in 2019. Aim of the study to help an inform an investment case for Cambridgeshire and learn from other approaches across the country. Research includes natural capital investments and looks at 22 other projects with 26 interviews. Covers the initiation, progress and successes. Strengths and weaknesses. Recommended process based on experiences elsewhere. Report includes partnership work, resources required and the communication needed, political support and income and business and investments required. Range of options to value nature in Cambridgeshire and suggested process. Recommended process to build a framework to attract funding. Report will be added to nature Cambridge website. Inputs into the LIFE bid.

RA - Doubling Nature Investment Fund is key to the success of Natural Cambridgeshire. Others are ahead but do have an opportunity to put Cambridgeshire on the map for nature recovery.

Actions

- **RA – Has shared Doubling Nature Investment Plan briefing report. All to read.**

8

Actions from previous meeting

Meeting 17th December

- Understand the impact of the proposed Biosphere on local plans – *Jane Green*
Meet with Biosphere – To be discussed at a later stage.
- Promote the Naturally Healthy agenda and engage with the Health and Wellbeing Board – *Cameron Adams*
- Work with developers to enhance nature either on site or through offsets – *Cameron Adams*
- Consider how best to engage with farmers and other landowners, and help them get better returns from their investments – *Rob Wise*
- Host a Green Summit – *Bridget Smith, Adrian Cannard*
- Collaborate with Natural Capital East – *Cameron Adams*
- Review progress of Doubling Nature at end 2020 – *Richard Astle*

9

AOB

MB – Local Plan – biodiversity submitted by July – although plan cycle runs until 2021. Can more time be allowed to submit information?

JG – GCSPS – Range of evidence and papers being collected. There is a request to alter the timeline. This is the start of the process. intention to share evidence base with wider stakeholder groups in around November. Then help the members make the decision. Consultation to take place next summer.

Matthew Bullock and Jane (GCSPS) to talk offline.