**Isbourne Catchment Group – AGM Minutes from Wednesday 28th November 2018 at the Betteridge Room, Sedgeberrow.**

**ICG Group Members Present** - Jem Williamson, Andy Thomas, Chris Deveraux-Little, Sue Morris and Annette Dawson

**Others Present -** EA, WCC, GCC, NFF, Gloucestershire University, Cotswold ANOB, FWAG and 3 public members – See Attendees sign in sheet.

**Apologies -** received from x 11 interested parties & recorded with the Secretary.

**Agenda**

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies received - Jem Williamson.
2. The Minutes from the last AGM on 6th November 2017 were approved.
3. Chairs Report – Jem Williamson talked through the report below.
4. Local Update – Wendy Bufton Natural Flood Management Project Officer Worcestershire County Council and Brian Smith, Adviser, Environment Agency - explaining the 3 year programme, basic NFM techniques and the work initiated at two demonstration projects in Sudeley and Toddington Estates.
5. Questions: Jo Leigh from FWAG explained the Facilitation Fund work progress with the aim of increasing farmers take up in the Isbourne catchment in the coming year.

In response to the question of how to maintain engagement and progress Wendy & Brian intend to set up a Network Delivery Group that will include community group representation, FWAG and NFF to plan work, communications etc. Once the demonstration sites are set up the intention will be to host community events to more widely publicise work and encourage take up across the area. Jem recommended the creation of a formal communications strategy as essentially ICG were the advocates for the scheme and it was key that we keep up the local, media and potential national interest. Rebecca suggested making further contact with Shipston given their positive work *–* ***Action Wendy / ICG***

With regard to monitoring current flows to demonstrate any benefits once interventions are in place, the EA/WCC are tendering for rainfall and flow monitoring/data to be in place Feb 2019. This will give pre & post intervention data and will be a key part of the communications strategy. It was agreed post meeting that there may be further opportunities for University of Gloucestershire engagement in flow measurements – ***Action Wendy / Lucy***

Chris queried whether increasing the flow once water passes Wormington was part of the project? The EA noted not, but they would happily engage with landowners if river bank debris was impeding flow rates in this lower end of the catchment; although in times of flood the key determinant was the level of the River Avon.

1. Appointments for coming year were voted and agreed.

Chair – Jem Williamson

Vice chair - Richard Wakeford

Secretary - Annette Dawson

1. AOB – None.

**AGM - Chairs Report from Item 3 above.**

Our mission remains the same - t*o minimise the impact of flooding; its frequency and severity in the River Isbourne catchment area.*

Progress update:-

1. Our subscriber base now stands at 72 with the simple mantra - the more members the greater the influence.
2. We have utilised the formal report by University of Gloucestershire/CCRI (Countryside and Community Research Institute) published last year to prioritise the Isbourne catchment within the Avon and Worcestershire tributaries “slow the flow” programme.
3. We reported last November that the Worcestershire NFM Project, including the Isbourne, had been allocated £500,000 from the DEFRA NFM Pilot Catchment Programme. Working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, the Environment Agency has appointed a full-time Project Officer, Wendy Bufton, who took up post in August. The Project funding is to March 2021. An additional £40k has also been secured, specifically for the Isbourne catchment. See Worcestershire County Council Web[Link](http://links.precise-media.co.uk/ProcessURL.aspx?ID=469352632) for more information.
4. Key issues against our delivery programme include:

* The appointment in August 2018 of a dedicated field officer for the Avon and Worcestershire tributaries (as above).
* The generous offer of office space by Winchcombe Town Council to enable the Project Officer to have a base in the Isbourne catchment.
* The identification of 2 demonstration projects, one in the upper reaches and one in the lower reaches of the catchment, for which we are grateful not only for the funding, and officer time but critically the support of local landowners, who have effectively championed the cause and without whom none of this would be possible.
  + The upper programme is based upon land at Charlton Abbots in the ownership of the Bailey brothers and focuses upon the Beesmoor Brook, and has been negotiated through our active Winchcombe based Vice Chair, Richard Wakeford. It is hoped that following further investigation that a fully funded programme can progress over the winter period with a view to having demonstration natural flood management projects in place in time for the next Winchcombe Walking Festival. GCC and Tewkesbury Borough Council with responsibility for drainage have committed to expedite the necessary approvals for this intervention to progress.
  + The second project lies within the lower catchment within the extensive Toddington Manor estate, on land farmed by Mr Bert Alvis and rather than slowing the flow, this champion is demonstrating how to create additional storage on the flood plain. As a result of the early work by the catchment group, notably our secretary Annette Dawson and member Sue Morris, supported by the University of Gloucestershire, our new project officer has been able to capitalise on earlier negotiations and create an opportunity for a flood attenuation scheme that will help generate capacity for the Isbourne in times of flood. The proposal was initially elsewhere within the estate but investigative works demonstrated a poor value for money outcome so in order to maximise our partnership investment a new scheme has been proposed with a much greater value and benefit profile. This scheme will not be able to be delivered until spring 2019 in order to accommodate the needs of the extremely supportive landowners and farmers.

1. In addition we have been liaising with the Environment Agency, Stroud Valleys and Carrant Brook to create opportunities to demonstrate good practice.

So overall we are confident that the next 6 months will see significant on-site delivery moving the group from the theoretical analysis to practical implementation and ultimately our first steps to *slow the flow* for the benefit of all residents and businesses within the Isbourne catchment.

**Jem Williamson**

**ICG Chair**