

NOTES OF THE **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 15th APRIL 2026** AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillor: R Buscombe (Chairperson) Presiding
M Joyce (Vice Chairperson)

Councillors: L Cooke
C Davieson
A Ineson
C Parker
M Ryan

Councillor P Bullivant was also in attendance

By invitation: 5 x Representatives of the Environment Agency

Officers In attendance: Linda McGuirk - Principal Administrator
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer

Also, in attendance Freeman Mike Hocking
Emily Farrell, Newton Abbot CIC Business & Community
Development Manager
Linda Robson Burell, Newton Abbot Seed Library
4 x Members of the public

46. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Valid reasons for absence were received from Councillors A Hall and L Wood.

Apologies were noted from Nigel Canham - Communications Advisor.

47. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

48. **MINUTES**

The notes of the Community Engagement Group meeting held on 25th February 2026 were received and signed as a correct record.

49. **PRESENTATION – ENVIRONMENT AGENCY, RIVER LEMON FISH PASS PROJECT**

The Chairperson, Councillor Richard Buscombe, welcomed the representatives from the Environment Agency, who delivered a detailed presentation on the River Lemon Fish Pass Project.

The presentation covered the following key points:

- Fish populations within the River Lemon
- Flood defence considerations
- Mitigation measures
- Examples of fish species currently present in the River Lemon
- Decline of fish species across the UK and risks to certain species
- Comparison of fish types and population densities
- Examples of similar projects undertaken elsewhere
- Benefits of pre-barrages and berms
- Construction programme and timescales
- Construction methodology
- Site access and parking arrangements
- Cricket field car park: It was noted that a meeting would be held with the Royal British Legion (RBL) to discuss access arrangements, including the potential temporary suspension of traffic restrictions to allow access via the RBL site.

Councillors and members of the public raised a number of questions and points for clarification:

- Whether the works would provide benefits to, or negatively impact, other species? The Environment Agency representative advised that monitoring would take place during construction (including checking fish caught on rocks), with ongoing oversight by the Environment Agency maintenance team thereafter.
- Whether there is evidence to demonstrate the success of similar projects? It was confirmed that such evidence exists and can be shared.
- Ownership of the River Lemon bed - Members queried the involvement of the landowner. The representative confirmed that the landowner has been consulted, provided with plans and details, and has not raised any objections to date.
- Tidal impact - Concerns were raised regarding the tidal nature of the River Lemon and the potential impact of the works. The representative advised that works would avoid high tide and that natural boulders are resilient to saltwater conditions.
- Will the rocks be affected by winter storms. It was confirmed that the design and fixing of the boulders have been engineered to withstand such conditions, and design details were shown.

- Bradley Mill area - Existing deep holes and historical damage to the river bed were acknowledged.
- Materials used - It was confirmed that marine-grade concrete would be used where required.
- Sewerage infrastructure - Members queried the potential impact of a sewer spill. The Environment Agency confirmed that South West Water has been consulted and that the project is being managed flexibly to mitigate risks.
- Project cost? The estimated cost of the project is approximately £500,000.
- Ongoing maintenance: Clarification on future maintenance responsibilities and costs was requested.
- Fencing repairs - Members asked whether damaged fencing in the area could be addressed.
- Community engagement - The representative outlined current engagement plans.
- How deep are the rocks going to be? Approx. 30cm above water at low flow period.
- Reach 2 – does modelling have an effect on overall project?

The Chairperson, Councillor Richard Buscombe, expressed his thanks to the Environment Agency representatives for their extensive and detailed presentation. He reaffirmed the Council's commitment to working collaboratively with them and maintaining ongoing communication, noting that this marked the beginning of continued dialogue.

20:00 hours the Community Engagement Group adjourned for 5 minutes to allow the EA representatives to pack up and leave the meeting.

20:00 Councillor P Bullivant left the meeting.

20:05 The Chairperson reconvened the meeting.

50. **ANNUAL REVIEW**

Members reviewed the work and achievements of the Community Engagement Group during the 2025/26 period, as detailed in the report circulated prior to the meeting. The Group considered options for monitoring and reporting ongoing progress.

Councillor R. Buscombe outlined his intention to maintain contact and continue working with organisations following their attendance at the Community Engagement Group, emphasising the importance of sustaining strong partnerships.

Members commended Councillor Buscombe for his Chairing of the Community Engagement Group.

It was noted that the first meeting of the Group in the new municipal year should be a meeting to set goals and objectives of the group.

51. **HOT TOPICS**

The Projects and Strategy Officer reported that he had been approached to join a Youth Forum as part of a Teignbridge District Council project. He advised that the first meeting is scheduled for June, with the aim of developing a published Youth Policy. It was noted that a presentation could be delivered to the Group in July.

Members were informed about Read Easy, an organisation supporting adults with literacy difficulties. The Group noted the positive work being undertaken and considered inviting representatives to deliver a presentation at a future meeting.

Members discussed the scheduling of the next meeting in July and asked the Principal Administrator to look for a sooner date.

It was agreed to invite representatives from South West Water and Churches Together to attend a future meeting of the Group.

52. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday 8th July 2026.

Meeting closed at 20:22

CHAIRPERSON..... Date.....