

# Tame Valley Wetlands Community Forum

## Meeting minutes, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017

### Abbreviations:

TVW= Tame Valley Wetlands

TVWLPS= Tame Valley Wetland Landscape Partnership

TVWLPS= Tame Valley Wetlands Landscape Partnership Scheme

FoTVW= Friends of Tame Valley Wetlands

### 1. Welcome (Rita Gries)

*“The TVWLPS is about to change, as our current funding is running out. As these changes happen, and going forward, we want the community to be involved, to become a key part of the TVWLPS. We thought that this could happen through the creation of a Friends of Tame Valley Wetlands umbrella group, where various members of the community and representatives of community group would sit. Today we want to discuss this idea, what the remit of this group should be, how it would work. This group should work for you, be led by you and your needs.”*

### 2. Introductions and Apologies

#### Present:

Rita Gries (TVWLPS), Tim Haselden (TVWLPS), Robert Williams (Middleton Hall Trust, Hodge Lane Conservation Group), Alan Rodgers (Friends of the Lakes), Angella Rodgers (Friends of the Lakes), Robin Pearson (Curdworth), Des Thornhill (Friends of Kingsbury Water Park), Richard Thomas (TVW volunteer, Shustoke), Janet Timms (Tameside Wildlife Conservation Group), Ron Timms (Tameside WCG), Diane Carleton (Tameside WCG), Adrian Nutter (Tameside WCG), Mandy Austin (Tameside WCG), Diane Wells (Hodge Lane Conservation Group), Shelley Pattison (Wild About Tamworth), David Biggs (Tamworth and District Civic Society)

#### Apologies:

Fiona Scott (Friends of Kingsbury Water Park), Sue Stallard (Friends of Kingsbury Water Park), Craig Stevens (Kingsbury), Anthony Poulton Smith (Tamworth Literature Festival), Martin Watson (Lea Marston Parish Council), Lee Hughes (Angling Club), Mark Weatherley (Curdworth Parish Council), John Hoyle (Coleshill Civic Society)

### 3. TVWLPS update (Rita Gries)

RG gave a short update outlining the work of the scheme over the past 3 years, to achieve the vision of **“creating a wetland landscape, rich in wildlife and accessible to all”**

### 4. TVWLPS plans for 2017-2018 (Tim Haselden)

The TVWLPS is currently funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, until the end of 2018. TVWLPS staff contracts run out between March and August 2018. There is still a lot to deliver but TVWLPS staff are also planning for the future, to ensure a seamless move to the next stage of the TVWLPS, to ensure activities and delivery on the ground continues.

In the next 12 months, the following work should happen:

- Restoring the paving in the Curdworth Tunnel

- Himalayan balsam rust fungus trial: <http://www.tamevalleywetlands.co.uk/himalayan-balsam-meets-its-match/>
- Borrowpit Lakes wetland restoration
- Ongoing practical conservation volunteering
- Telling the Tale of the Tame (cultural heritage project).  
<http://www.tamevalleywetlands.co.uk/tellingthetaleofthetame/>
- Grants for local groups, with no match funding required. Contact Tim or Rita if interested.
- Circular walks and Tame Way creation. Let us know if you know of routes / sites where improvements are needed.
- Training for local groups: <http://www.tamevalleywetlands.co.uk/whats-on/community-group-training-courses/>
- Film documentary: will showcase work of scheme and act as tourism advertisement.

## 5. Legacy and planning for the future (TH)

TVWLP working on developing legacy and future vision / strategy for next phase, post 2018. This includes:

- TVW area has been designated as Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull's first Nature Improvement Area (NIA). This puts no constraints on development but puts area in national planning framework, to recognise its importance for nature. See appendix 1 for map.
- TVWLP working on widening the NIA area, for stronger upstream thinking (including tributaries rivers Cole, Blythe, Bourne and Anker) and partnership working.
- Engagement with wider stakeholders, farmers, partnerships and local groups.
- Establishing FoTVW and updating Partnership governance.
- Finding more money for habitat improvement and community engagement.

Vision to 2030: **By 2030, the Tame Valley Wetlands will be a high quality, well-known and valued landscape, rich in wildlife, beauty and culture for all to enjoy.** This vision is explained in details in a consultation document, offered at meeting and available on demand.

The TVWLP Board has decided on four themes to take forward, with several actions proposed for each theme. A consultation is currently ongoing to decide which actions to focus on. Attendees had the opportunity to vote on their preferred actions.

### The four themes are:

- A. Delivering landscape-scale connectivity and habitat creation & management
- B. Maximising opportunities from strategic planning and developments
- C. Community engagement and ownership
- D. Tourism: marketing and destination development

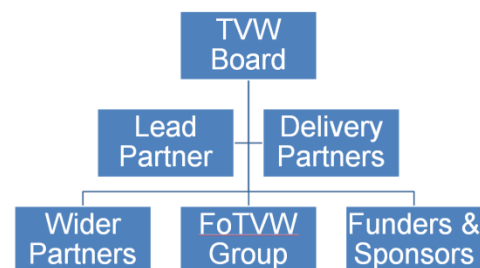
### Governance structure.

See appendix 2 for current governance structure.

The TVWLP is not currently an entity in its own right. There are currently 8 organisations on the Board, led by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, who ensure the delivery of the scheme and plan for the future. The Board members and structure is set to evolve soon.

This is the proposed future governance:

The Board will continue to make decisions and have ultimate responsibility and risk. The FoTVW group would feed into the Board's decision-making process, as would wider partners (currently 14 partners who do not sit on the Board), funders and sponsors.



## 6. Discussion on scope and remit of FoTVW group

RG and TH explained again what their vision of the group would be:

- Various members of the community, representing local groups and /or communities sit on group and feed back to the TVWLP Board.
- This could be by giving their opinion / feedback on future projects or funding applications, by raising issues and ideas to the board, giving opinion on advocacy
- Groups would be able to apply for support from Board.
- Groups could highlight work needed in local area, for TVWLP TameForce volunteers to complete.

RG and TH stressed that these were just their ideas, but that FoTVW should be led by the local community for the local community, so attendees might have different opinions.

Discussion took place with the following points raised:

### Is group a good idea? What are the benefits?

- People on the ground / community need to have a say. As a group, can collaborate, rather than compete, co-ordinate feedback and have a stronger voice.
- People need to be aware of the connection between different areas of TVW. What happens in one place affects the others.
- Linking with other initiatives through TVWLP (e.g. Transforming the Trent, projects on River Blythe, Bourne and Cole). Avoid fragmentation.
- Linking with and receiving updates from TVWLP partners or stakeholders.
- Preserving the resources that TVWLP has built.
- Maintain link between TVWLP and community.
- Shared interests and concerns, know what is going on throughout TVW area.
- Creating joint funding bids.
- Getting help with activities to encourage participation.

### How should the group work?

- Feedback would be easier than meetings, because of time constraints.
- The group should be called "forum" rather than "friends of". "Friends of" is confusing as most "friends of groups are individuals doing practical work.

- Staff will need to coordinate group, organise meetings, take minutes etc. to ensure it keeps going.
- Quarterly meetings would be good frequency (TVWLP board meets quarterly).
- Online forum, using Facebook group or other platform?
- Online meetings using Skype or other platform.
- Need Terms of References creating.
- Need specific roles assigned to members of group.

#### **Who else should be involved?**

- Landowners (landowners association?).
- Parish councils.
- Young people: young farmers, youth groups, schools, scouts and guides.
- Workers groups.
- U3A.
- Need to set some boundaries to ensure group does not become too wide and unmanageable. Also need system to ensure each group, no matter the size, has equal weight.

#### **Voting**

##### **Should the group go ahead as TVW Community Forum?**

Majority in favour

##### **Should the group meet face to face quarterly?**

Majority in favour (9)

##### **Should the group meet only online?**

Minority on favour (2)

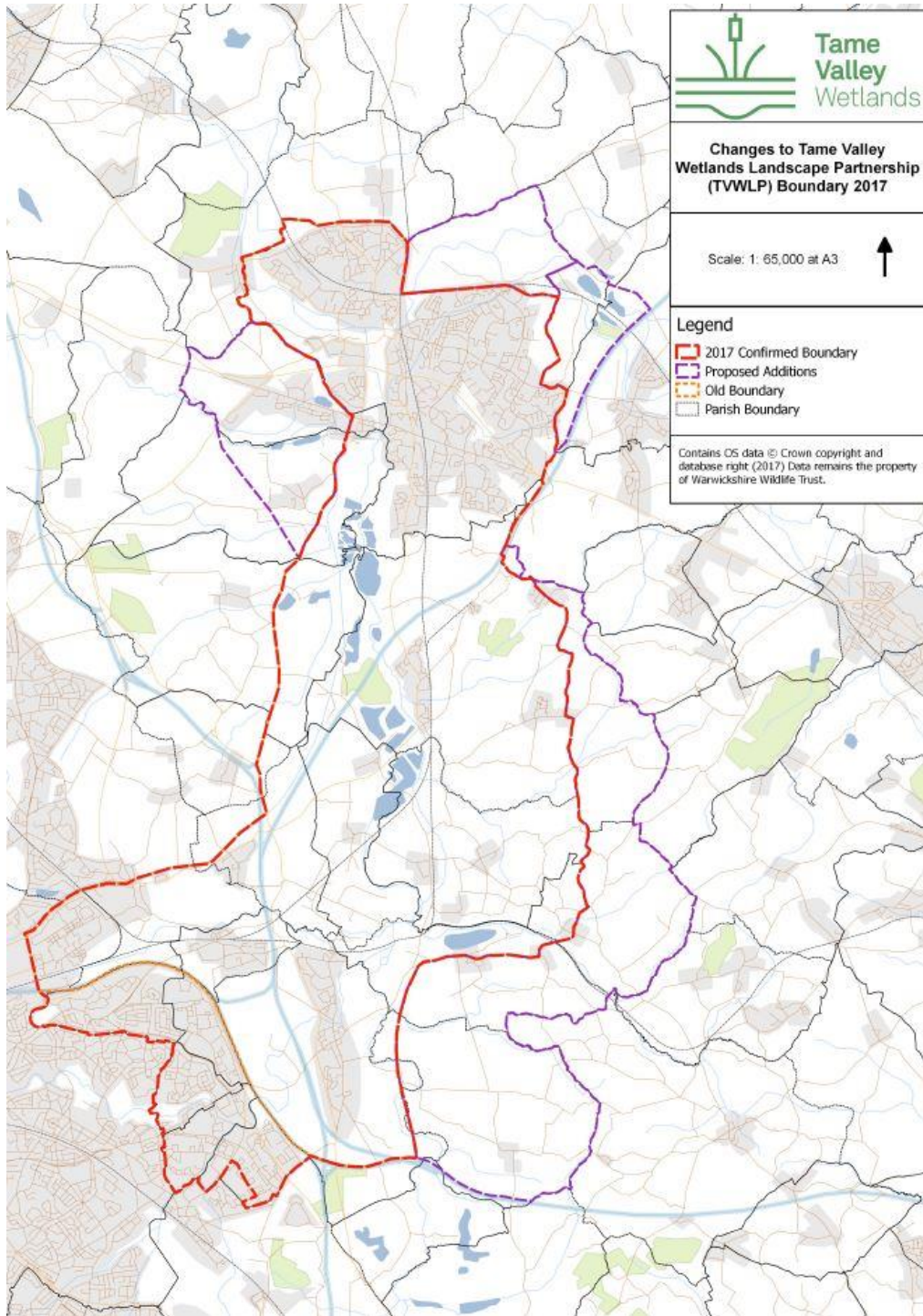
##### **Should group do both?**

Majority in favour

##### **Should group have terms of reference?**

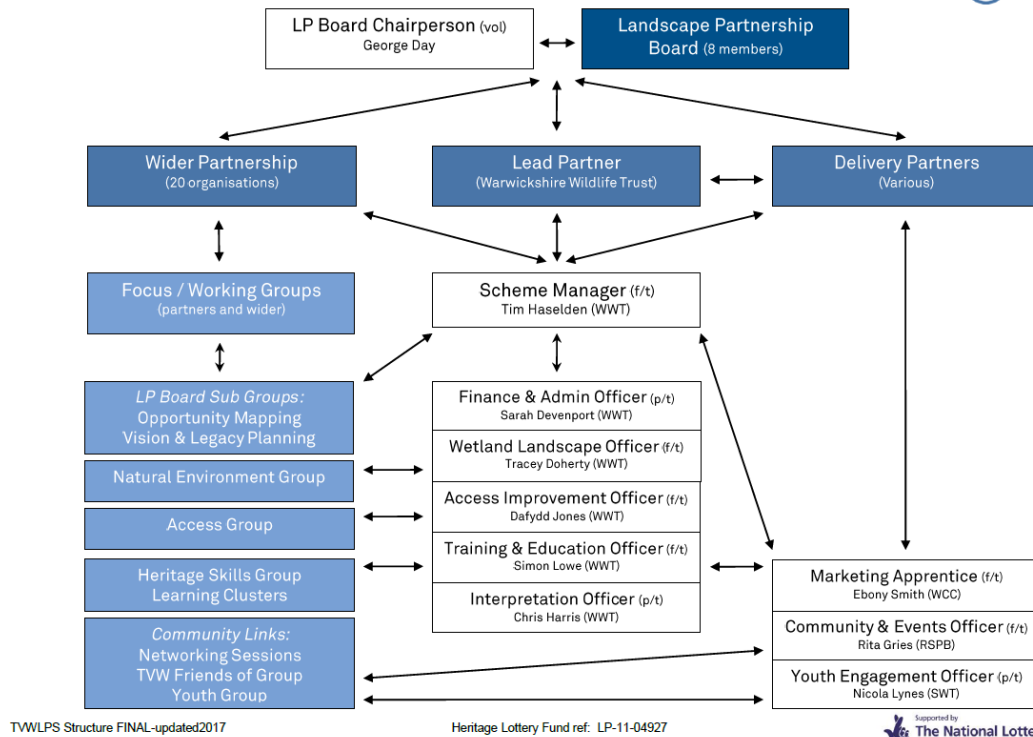
Majority in favour

It was agreed that RG and TH would look draft Terms of Reference before next meeting. The next meeting will be held in January 2018, the exact date will be decided via a Doodle online poll. RG and TH will investigate options for online forum.



Appendix 1. Changes to TVWLP boundary 2017

# TVW Landscape Partnership Management Structure



Appendix 2. Current TVWLPS management structure.