

Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution

Minutes

Title of meeting: Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution

Location: Skype

Date of Meeting: Monday 14th December 2020

Present Members

Zoe Henderson, NRW (Chair)

Geraint Llyr Davies, NRW

Dennis Matheson, TFA

Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru

Creighton Harvey, CFF

Bob Vaughan, NRW

Sarah Hetherington, NRW

Sarah Jones, Dwr Cymru

Marc Williams, NRW

Katy Simmons, NRW

John Browne, NRW

Kate Snow, United Utilities

Ruth Johnston, NRW

Fraser McAuley, CLA

James Ruggeri, HCC

Liz Franks, HD Cymru

Edward Davies, NRW

Bernard Griffiths, FUW

Einir Williams, FC

Lee Price, FC

Chris Mills, WEL

Apologies

Spencer Conlon, WG

Andrew Chambers, WG

Nik Salter, NRW

Matt Lowe, NRW

Item 1: Welcome

Chris Mills will be replacing Stephen Marsh-Smith as the representative for Wales Environment Link (WEL) on the sub group, Arfon Williams will continue to support Chris in this role. Chris Mills is the Chairman of Afonydd Cymru, having formally led the Environment Agency Wales. Chris Mills joined the meeting at 10:30am.

Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest.

NB: All members of the group have completed declaration of interest forms already but should also declare if they have an interest in anything on the agenda.

Item 2: Minutes from previous meeting on 2nd November 2020

NB: Bronwen Martin will be joining the WLMF team from the 17th of December, to work with the full forum and support the sub group on agricultural pollution. Bronwen will be responsible for taking the minutes in the future.

Corrections

Page 1 James Ruggeri, HCC and Ruth Johnston, NRW were missed off the list of attendees.

Page 5 Para 7 should read 'position' not 'potion'.

Action Points

Minor errors within the minutes from 2nd November due to unfamiliar minute taker. Issues with not recognising initials in last months' minutes also identified.

AP December 01: Corrections to be made to the 2nd November minutes (ZH/MW)

AP July 01: SJ to send information from DCWW to explain what CSOs are.

Completed: Information and leaflet forwarded to sub group members.

At the meeting on 16th November CH gave an account of proceedings at the Magistrates' Court regarding two cases of water pollution which should be included in the minutes.

AP December 02: Brief minutes for meeting on the 16th November to be produced (MW).

AP December 03: CH to write account of proceedings and send to MW for inclusion in minutes.

AP November 03: RV to update group on latest regarding an incident in Pontithel.

Unable to give update on 14th December due to legal constraints. RV to give update to group as soon as possible given legal sensitivities.

AP November 04: RV and ZH to review ToR to ensure they are complementary with other working groups such as Fisheries and Water Forums. Ensure that messages coming out of this group are fed into others.

ZH and RV to update ToR if necessary.

AP March 03: Mark Squire (MS) to speak to WG about capital funding for water sampling kits.

MS has had discussions, but RV has not had feedback yet. RV to chase and find out any outcomes.

AP December 04: MW to circulate information on FC engagement to the group.

AP July 11: SC to send information to MW to circulate about waste plastics.

MW sent email to chase, no response at time of meeting.

AP July 04: RV to catch up with KS regarding compliance on representative farms in the Dee catchment.

RV to follow up.

AP November 10: RJ to give update on River Basement Management Plans to the group.

RJ sent information to MW to circulate.

AP November 11: SJ to share case study from the Brecon Beacons Mega Catchment projects

SJ to share case study once complete.

AP November 12: SJ to find out more information about maize undersowing trials

Delayed due to Covid.

AP December 05: MW to have further discussions with Geraint Hamer, WG, regarding soil sampling data.

MW to follow up.

AP November 15: CH to share learning from Afonydd Cymru.

CH recalled previous presentations given in 2019 which can be circulated on request.

AP November 17: RV to talk to climate change department in WG.

RV to follow up.

Item 3: Priority recommendations – Actions update from previous meeting.

ZH wanted to identify who is doing what and the specific issues related to where they are going to keep moving actions forward.

MW shared screen with spreadsheet of recommendations and asked that the group identify actions, where they can support, and timescales.

Recommendation 3.1:

MW update from the Nutrient Loading Project, NRW securing funding from WG to secure a contractor to deliver the project. WG sent the specification to ADAS for a quote last week however unlikely to receive a quote until the New Year. ADAS to provide a quote for 3 different work packages which the project has been broken into. Hopefully work package 1 and 2 can be delivered in this financial year.

MW will have a discussion with WG regarding water quality funded projects in the New Year.

MW AW had highlighted a need to understand the scale of the issue (agricultural pollution) on November 2nd however had not offered any suggestions as to how this would be done.

ZH The scale of the problem will come out with the findings of the project.

MW a comment made by SJ on November 2nd about the baseline of agricultural pollution and the barriers to behavioural change. FC nutrient and infrastructure reports and level of engagement with these. LP has put together a document looking at the Pendine and the Gele.

LP yes that's correct. FC can do engagement analysis if it's helpful. (LP gave overview of document shared on screen of engagement data). Currently only analysed the Pendine and Gele catchment however could do for others if useful. Table 1 shows engagement of businesses in the catchment with all FC activities, e.g. advisory services, mentoring, clinics. LP then went through data. Table 2 shows the same businesses engaging in an event, a clinic, or a surgery. Table 3 shows business engagement with the Farm Advisory Service. LP described the nature of the advice businesses have been accessing. The analysis gives an idea of the level of engagement within the priority catchments and could be used to inform whether continue with more priority work or more general work. Data for other catchments can be acquired if useful and it has a purpose.

RV said that he thought the data was really useful. Gives a focus on the engagement within the catchment. If we know what our issues are in the catchment, we can marry the two together and give us some pointers.

GLD asked what the reason was for some businesses having not engaged.

ZH asked whether it was looking at all farmers within the catchment or just farmers that have engaged at all.

LP said that these are all the businesses that are registered with FC within the catchment postcodes. Data unlikely to be 100% of businesses however it is all that are registered with FC. LP could not answer why some businesses had not engaged, it could be that some businesses do not feel they need to engage or that they don't know the full range of services available. If this analysis was carried out for all catchments FC could write to the businesses that are not engaging and inform them what services are available in their particular catchments. All registered businesses will have been invited to organised events. FC can undertake analysis of all priority catchments to try and address issue of businesses not engaging.

RV said that if we are taking messages forward, we would want to see the numbers moving to the right of the tables (increased engagement).

LP this would then act as a baseline from which to start.

MW said that he thought this information would help when doing the targeted catchment work to improve how advice was given to farmers.

RLD said that this reinforces that the catchment approach is the correct one and builds awareness at community level.

BG said that the data should be weighted to reflect those that have engaged with several interventions.

LP said, Einir Williams will be taking over as the interim representative from FC so he will work with her to bring the reports for the other catchment areas for the next meeting.

SJ asked, on the numbers side, they are the numbers registered with farming connect, do we know if there are people that are not registered at all? WG will know how many people claim single farm payment in that catchment area. Could compare the potential number that could be engaged with against how many are engaging.

RV said, I think that's the question we need to ask WG

LP said, probably we would have, I hope, most of the big dairy, beef and sheep, red meet farms in the catchment. I think we would have the main businesses in the catchment, particularly the dairy, 90% of dairy farms in Wales are registered with FC. I don't have the answers on the total number of farms though.

SJ said, you don't want to spend time chasing, you want to put the majority of the effort to the people who need it most.

LP said, generally from the perspective of FC, recently had meetings with the strategic advisory board and delivery board, about whether to go with the harder to reach, disengaged businesses or progress with the businesses that are registered and ensure that those that are registered are getting the advice that they need. What the data doesn't show is that all registered businesses get bimonthly technical publication, and 'What's on' emails, either centrally or through their local development officers. All registered businesses are getting a whole host of information on various topics, such as soil management, water management, so, they are engaging potentially, but that is not counted in the data in this analysis which is only those that are attending events. They are all getting communication and for some, that might be enough, they may be making

decisions on farm based on what they are reading in our publications or the website however FC cannot record that.

EW said, remember with the priority catchments, Gele in particular, I was involved going back to 2018 when there were awareness workshops, we rang everyone in the catchments as we were allowed lists of everyone in the catchments. Otherwise FC is limited to those businesses registered. I think we would have a higher percentage within the priority catchments because every business was contacted.

LP said they do collect feedback from the attended events. Report on the back of the priority events showed that the feedback was well received. The report can be circulated to members if required.

AP December 06: Report of feedback from FC engagement events to be circulated (LP).

GLD asked, what are the next steps for this, as a farmer I want to see things happening instead of papers.

LP said, I think that is what the forum is here to agree. At the last meeting I offered that FC could do some more priority catchment work or could continue with the general FC push on agri pollution. At the moment most of our work is digital. With digital we have found that we are engaging with different people which could be good. It is down to the forum to make the decision.

RV said, from our point of view we set up the priority catchments last time round based on the WFD where the information suggested that the waterbodies were being affected by agricultural pollution, those were the ones we focused on. That worked very well at picking out a series of catchments we could work in, I think we need to review the situation to see if these are still the priority catchments and whether others get onto the list as well and focus our efforts again. We need to go away and identify where we want to focus and come back to the group and say this is where we have identified. This can then be fed back to FC to show where we want extra engagement.

CH said, it's obvious that a lot of the problems that occur are isolated in certain places because of the type of farming that occurs in certain places. We have the situation on the Wye with phosphate because of poultry farms and in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire regarding dairy farms and I would like to see concentration on those two areas. If you sort those two areas out, the figures for Wales improve dramatically, and the figures for water quality improve dramatically. I would also say, it is all very well saying you focus on the bigger farms and the bigger business, it is not always the bigger farms and the bigger business that cause the problems. The cases I have seen in the courts recently are relatively small businesses. I don't think you can concentrate on the big farms otherwise there is a substantial source of pollution not addressed.

ZH said, I don't think we have said we are focussing on the bigger farms.

CH said LP had mentioned that, he questioned whether we should concentrate on the bigger businesses to improve existing engagement with FC. You also need to focus on smaller farms which are not engaging.

RV said we need to focus on all farms in the areas that we identify. We can use the analysis that LP has shown us to track our progress in increasing engagement in priority areas. If the data doesn't pick up the farms that aren't engaging or the smaller farms, then we need to find a new way to look at this so we can take into account all business in the priority areas.

CH said it's important that all farms in those areas are identified and are tackled regardless of size.

RV said, I assure everyone that is our intention. A big farm in a big catchment has a big impact but a small farm in a small catchment can also have a big impact.

DM asked, is there any threat to the funding to FC because of the cut in funding to WG next year? And subsequently to the funding to this programme?

LP said, there is no threat to the funding of the current programme to August 2022. Additional funding from the RDP of 1.875m has been provided for the Advisory Service, which can support 1250 instances of advice. The message that the Advisory Service is available and funded. There is 15-18 months left of delivery time as time needs to be allowed for the writing of the report. If we want to get these messages out, the sooner we decide what the catchments are we can start planning in the New Year.

MW said, I can have discussions with RJ about what priority catchments we want going forward.

FM said, the bigger farms often have the infrastructure to deal properly with agricultural emissions although there is obviously a range.

AP December 07: Identify priority catchments and priority recommendations for those areas prior to the January meeting (NRW).

ZH said, we need to know who we are targeting and what the messages are. We need to have a strong programme, but I liked seeing that data because we want to get more people engaged. We know that people listen to the messages when they are engaged.

RLD said, there are 3 things that NFU Cymru would like to see moving forward with the programme with FC. Reinforcing messages going to the people who have been targeted within the existing areas. We really support the catchment approach, we would like to see the identification of new catchments that would benefit from this, alongside the general awareness raising across the whole of the industry. You can have good catchments with some bad practice in those catchments. During the next year we need to be up and running as quickly as possible. I also wanted RV to provide an update about the phosphate in the Wye following the comments made by CH.

RV said, the work is still ongoing, we were looking at a launch this week, however that has been delayed because we have decided to look at all the SAC rivers in Wales. We have yet to talk to the local planning authorities, because of the implications what we are going to say might have. Discussions have already happened with Powys, and I think Monmouthshire, however discussions haven't been had with some of the other authorities. That engagement is happening at the moment, once that has happened, we will be able to release that report. It might be that the report is not released until the New Year.

RLD said, I don't suspect you are able to go into the detail of the report if it hasn't been published and whether the issues in the Wye are poultry related or not, so it can be correctly reflected in the minutes.

RV said, the difficulty has been that we have had to look at the SAC standards rather than the WFD as they are a lot more stringent in terms of the quality that must be achieved. There are a number of SAC catchments including the Wye, Usk, Towey and Tyfi. The standards are quite stringent and, in most cases, we are striving to get down to those levels. In general, phosphate levels have decreased in Wales, but not at the rate we might have expected them to, given the investment by water companies. Some of the targets that have been set and not met are not in the catchments that you might expect. Although there has been a big increase in poultry units in the Wye and there has been phosphate increases in some of the catchments where the development has occurred, we have seen levels within other catchments that don't have the proliferation of poultry units. They certainly have led to some increases in phosphate, but it is more likely to more than 1 issue of poultry on its own.

RLD said, thank you. We will look at it in close detail.

MW said, if everyone could look at the spreadsheet and if there are actions that you could help with, please get in touch. I will get in touch with KS to see if there is any funding available on the Dee.

ZH said, it's important that we use the spreadsheet and identify actions to make progress on some of the issues we have identified.

Item 4: Update on Agriculture Pollution Data

ZH prior to discussing agriculture pollution data, ZH took opportunity to welcome Chris Mills, new representative for WEL to the group.

CM Apologised for arriving late. CM gave background of employment history and looking forward to working with the group.

MW shared screen showing data and graphs of the most recent agricultural pollution data up until the end of November. Data collected on the Wales Incident Response System in NRW.

ZH said, it was good to see the graph on substantiated agriculture incidents decreasing from 2018 to 2020.

CM said, asked whether there was an issue that some of the pollution types by sector were more likely to reported than others and whether this had been looked at as an issue.

MW said, we can only work off the information that has been reported to NRW. Some of the data may be reported by NRW staff.

RV said, there will be differences in reporting because incidents don't get reported and background pollution such as metal mines doesn't get picked up. NRW are also using other methods to identify other background inputs as well. There are differences between 'pollutions' reported and 'pollution' that is occurring in the environment.

CM was pointing out that the data is what is being reported but not necessarily the whole picture.

FM said, that it was not good that the number of unidentified pollutions was increasing.

BG said that the improvement in agriculture incidents over the last 2 years is quite significant, ~35%.

RV said, when we are focussing our effort on catchments, we are looking at the background condition in the catchment so that we can then engage and get the right messages across.

ED confirmed that this data will include incidents that NRW staff and officers pick up whilst out on site and conducting targeted work so that there is a record.

GLD asked whether similar patterns were being seen throughout the UK compared to Wales.

MW said that there hadn't been any comparisons made with England or Scotland. There was an intention to compare with EA, SEPA and NI data, however this hasn't been carried out.

SH said that she had looked at a comparison between the SW of England, the Midlands and Cumbria, to reflect Wales' climate areas and farming types. The issue is that the data is not collected in the same way any longer in England, so it is hard to compare. The reporting system changed when Farming Rules for Water was brought in.

MW asked whether the National Incident Reporting System (NIRS) was still in use in the EA?

SH said that NIRS was still being used but the way they collect data to feed into it has changed so it doesn't necessarily reflect what was going on, on the ground.

GLD said it's good to see the data going in the right direction, but that one incident is one to many and that's what we are here to work towards resolving.

MW showed updated graph from the interim report showing results from 2001. Had tried to look at correlations with weather however this has not happened to date.

CM asked whether the incident reporting system had changed in this period?

MW said that the system from 2001 to 2016 was the EA NIRS system, from 2016 onwards it switched to WIRS. The information how its captured is very similar, there have been some changes in recent years to capture extra data, such as self-reporting.

GLD asked what 'other Agriculture source' referred to.

ZH admitted that the graphs aren't perfect, but they do give a general idea of trends.

MW said, that the graphs require caveats to explain the data. Where 'Other agricultural sources' is selected by an officer, further information has to be inputted into WIRS. This

information is not captured in the data being shown in the graphs. 'Unknown source' is likely to have been a pollution on agricultural land but the source was not identified.

GLD asked whether he could discuss this further with MW to understand the data.

MW showed quarterly data of pollution incidents to identify trends of when incidents occur. Notable spike in January – March. Data includes 'high' and 'low' incidents. MW expected that there were less incidents this year due to Covid and inability for officers and people to report incidents. MW showed data on the root cause of incidents, with the majority of incidents being attributed to 'accidental', 'management failure' or 'route cause not identified'. MW explained that sometimes it is not possible to identify the cause however training is ongoing to ensure staff are able to do this accurately.

ZH said that this shows the importance of communications in January – March.

CM asked what the definition of 'management failure' was.

MW said he did not know. He would find definitions and circulate this information.

CM said that 'management failure' is likely to cut across several of the other categories.

AP December 08: Acquire definitions for WIRS categories and circulate (MW).

MW showed graph of substantiated and unsubstantiated incidents, which highlights the impact of the Covid lockdown on increasing unsubstantiated incidents. Reporters were encouraged to send in photos with reports to provide better information for officers to act on and contact farmers.

FM asked whether the spikes in Jan-March were as a result stock over housed during the winter or greater awareness of enforcement.

MW said that pulling out reasons for the increases required greater interrogation of the data. I can put some caveats around the graphs and send them out to the group members.

AP December 09: MW to circulate updated Agriculture Pollution Data to the group.

ZH said, potentially we had a noticeable 'Covid effect'.

MW said, yes potentially there was a 'Covid effect', particularly at the start of lockdown in March. There was a lot of unsubstantiated incidents as officers were unable to attend. Once guidance was approved and officers returned to attending high level incidents and some low level incidents with appropriate risk assessments, this appears to decrease. Attendance is not always required where photographs are included with reports and contacting landowners.

CM asked, if there is any evidence from the WFD monitoring of agricultural pollution.

MW said, there is data from WFD monitoring, this hasn't been compared with the incident data as yet. Maps of high number of incidents occurrence could be compared with areas of WFD failures.

CM said, the data is useful but has clear limitations as it is what is reported not necessarily what is happening. Other evidence that is not reliant on reporting such as the monitoring programme and inspection would be a useful adjunct to the incident data.

MW agreed and said that this could be looked at.

RV said that whilst there were limitations it was useful evidence to help focus resources.

Item 5: Dairy Project update

MW showed maps and data supplied by ML, team leader for the Dairy Project in NRW. Information can be supplied to group members. Information is up to date to the end of October 2020. Dairy Officers attend farms and produce report, which is then reviewed by senior officers before being sent to the farmers with 1 month. All the dairy officer positions have been filled, including 3 senior posts, 1 in North Wales, 1 in Mid, and 1 in South Wales. There are currently 9 dairy officers and 3 senior officers. The delivery of the program has been disrupted by staff turnover and the lockdown periods. All positions are fixed term appointments ending on the 31st of March 2021 which could lead to further staff churn. Unfunded pressures bid has been submitted to secure future funding.

CH asked, are there proposals to make any of the staff permanent to improve staff experience and confidence so that they can ask the right questions.

MW said, it is important to retain staff, particularly those who have gained the experience and knowledge, however unfortunately due to the nature of the funding, it is not possible to guarantee this.

ZH said this has been raised at board level as these roles are important given the changes coming.

RV said that the bid has been put in and that there had been discussions with WG to increase the stability of the roles. Progress is being made with the project and the staff that join the project often find roles in other areas of NRW where their knowledge can still be retained and used.

CH said, I saw a case in court last week where the defence said that there had been an inspection in 2018 and that the pollution that was identified in 2019 and was the subject of the case was present in 2018 and not picked up. It is possible that the more significant resultant pollution could have been avoided. 2018 was the start of the dairy project when the advisors might have been inexperienced. Experienced staff needed.

RV said, that NRW is trying to improve the competency of staff and train them up to raise the bar.

CH requested a meeting outside of the group with RV to discuss the specific incidence.

RLD commented on the dairy visits, NFU Cymru's original vision of the project was that they would establish a trusted team as WG have with the Farm Liaison Service. Where relations build with farmers over time and farmers are able to approach staff. NFU Cymru believe that for a number of reasons this has not happened and that this is a missed opportunity.

RV asked whether we could talk outside the group to see how to improve the service.

RLD welcomed the opportunity.

ZH said there was a good opportunity to push forward with this.

MW showed graphs of slurry storage capacity and livestock nutrient loading of farms visited. A graph of livestock numbers on farms showed that the modal average is farms with 100-120 LSU.

RLD asked, if there could be a distinction between farms that are tenant vs owned farms and farms with a TB breakdown and those without as these issues severely affect the ability of the farm business to respond.

MW agreed to take this point back to ML.

GLD said that the graph for livestock should be made clearer to read as LSU does not equate directly to livestock numbers.

Item 6: The Water Standard

RV said, The Water Standard was worked on by a number of the groups present, how can we now move forward with this document to take the Water Standard forward. We are keen to see the Standard taken forward and it is up to the members of the group today to sign up to it and/or to get the best benefit from the document.

MW said, we would like to collate any further comments made on the Water Standard so that we can bring it back to the group and have a discussion at a later date. If there is anyone on the call who has any views on how to take the standard forward now?

RLD said, NFU Cymru led the project and partnership organisation of the development of the Water Standard and are keen not to lose the progress but accept that what we've got is not the finished article and there might be more opportunities such as a website. The development of a farmer friendly tool might be a way forward. NFU Cymru are going to struggle to commit much time and resource to it currently. There are other organisations such as Gelli Aur who might be able to help progress things. The big problem is if WG opt to proceed with the implementation of new NVZ regulations which NFU Cymru continue to reject, there seems very little space to advance this agenda.

RV agreed with Rachel's comments but questioned whether we could continue with a light touch approach and speak to other members of the group to continue to progress the project. We still don't know what the water regulations are leading to and have no indication of whether the Minister is minded to introduce them. We are working on the basis that the proposed regulations do not cover everything we want them to and so I am willing to try and bring everyone together to continue work on the Water Standard. I would welcome the continued involvement of NFU Cymru, and other members present and absent.

MW asked whether we should set up a separate group to progress this particular project.

RV said he would like it to report to this group but suggested setting up a small task and finish group.

***AP December 10: Set up task and finish group to progress Water Standard (ED).
Volunteers: NRW, RLD, FM, GLD, CM, DM, SJ.***

DM raised a point – solid manure and digestate spread to our land is incorporated within 24 hours at the latest. Require an appropriate store for slurry. Ensure manure is not spread at inappropriate times. Establish a WG agriculture pollution group. Reduce air born emissions for urea based fertiliser. Design future farm support around sustainability, rewarding farmers for actions carried out and delivering improvement in air quality. I have read that directly from page 91 of the Clean Air Plan for Wales, December 2019. TFA responded to consultation expressing concerns. There is a conflict between WG pushing forwards with new Water Regulations based on the Clean Air Plan, when this group is still trying to pursue a voluntary plan.

RV agreed. We will take this up with WG.

DM said, it will be too late. There is too much working in silos.

RV said, we can ask a representative from WG to attend a sub group meeting to address this issue.

AP December 11: Invite a representative of WG to the sub group to discuss the Clean Air Plan and potential Water Regulations (RV).

RLD agreed with **DM** that there appears to be silo working within WG and NRW. We need a joined up approach to take forward initiatives.

RV agreed, NRW trying to take a joined up approach and bring colleagues in WG together.

Item 7: Communications

KS shared the communications plan on screen with the group to agree on key messages and prioritised actions. New message included in the plan highlighting the good work that a lot of farmers are already doing. There is still an issue that a lot of farmers may not know how to report an incident and the importance of doing so quickly.

RV asked, is a fundamental issue that people do not recognise what 'pollution' is?

CH requested that an amendment to the document so that on page 9 it reads 'regulation' rather than 'regulations' as this captures the entire process and enforcement options available.

CM asked, why the word 'minimise' is being used with regards to pollution and not 'avoid' pollution.

CH said, when the interim report was drafted, we agreed upon 'eliminate agricultural pollution' to make it clear the aims.

RV agreed. The groups terms of reference involve 'stopping all agricultural pollution'.

ZH asked whether the group was happy to use 'avoid' or 'prevent' as a suitable replacement for 'minimise'.

Group agreed 'prevent'.

KS moved on to look at the list of prioritised actions. **KS** to pull together all the key messages and communications and would like to get agreement and sign off from the members of the sub group and commitment to spread these messages.

AP December 12: KS to circulate comms paragraph explaining the membership and role of the WLMF sub group.

KS said, a partner pack is also being developed, to include the key messages and comms plan. Other tools and press releases can be added to partner pack as progress made. Intention to use Audience Insights Survey to identify how farmers want to be communicated with. See if there has been a shift through lockdown towards digital and ensure efforts are being directed appropriately.

ZH asked, if **KS** has spoken to **AHDB** who may have done work in this area.

AP December 13: KS to speak to AHDB to see what work has already been carried out in this area.

KS said that **NRW** would undertake a review of communications literature. In the future, group members can share the communications tools that are already established to make best use. Plans to develop a communications calendar with seasonal messaging. Would like contributions, newsletters, podcasts, events from group members. Asked the group whether there was a desire to restart the **WLMF** newsletter and make sure that the most is made out of the regular column in the **NFU** newsletter. Suggested that we could use the next column to explain the **WLMF** sub group and the plans for the year ahead.

ZH said, she was happy to put something together for the newsletter column.

AP December 14: ZH to prepare a newsletter piece for the NFU column explaining the sub group plans for the year.

RV asked whether there were other groups willing to accept articles from the sub group as part of their regular communications with members.

FM said there is a **CLA** magazine that goes to all members and would liaise regarding possible content.

DM said, there are no references to landlords, their tenants and land agents within the Communications Plan. Can we include a point to improve communication between landlord agents and tenants as this has a significant bearing on agriculture pollution and compliance.

KS agreed and said she would include something within the plan.

RV said, it would be good to prepare and agree newsletter articles and circulate to a wider range of sources. Repeated messaging from different areas will increase the impact.

BG said, information is shared via the **FUW** intranet and shared at committee meetings.

RLD said that NFU Cymru has introduced a Water Quality Matters feature in *Farming Wales* magazine.

KS suggested agreeing a topic each month and adapting articles for each newsletter. 12 articles for the year ahead could be forward planned.

ZH said that it would be worth focussing on articles for the first quarter where pollution incidents are highest.

AP December 15: Identify topics for upcoming months and prepare articles for circulation (ALL).

RLD said forward planning was important for articles to go in newsletters to meet strict deadlines.

MW asked whether any other groups had messages that they could also contribute.

RV said, that these communications could be used to flag things, such as fish migrations, to the land management community.

ZH said, it is an excellent plan and if everyone supports, we can help farmers understand the issues. Let's focus on Q1 to begin with.

Item 8: Arrangements for future Sub Group meetings

All meetings will be via Microsoft Teams going forward:

- Monday 25th January 2021
- Monday 22nd February 2021
- Monday 22nd March 2021
- Monday 19th April 2021
- Monday 17th May 2021

Item 9: Any other Business

FM asked for an update on the NRW consultation regarding ammonia and nitrogen guidance.

RV said the consultation closed in November and that the information received was being looked at.

AP December 16: Update on Ammonia Screening Guidance consultation within the January meeting.

FM asked about the River Severn Partnership work and NRW involvement, whether there was any relevance to this group.

AP December 17: Circulate information about the River Severn Partnership to the group (RV).

ZH spoke about a slurry management investment scheme the EA are working on for delivery in 2022. Recognition that there is a market failure and large scale non compliance on farm and what actions need to be put in place to bring the industry up to speed. It would be beneficial to watch the direction the EA take.

RV said that future meetings will be held on Microsoft Teams.

Close meeting