

# 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:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Date of Meeting:** 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Present:**

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

Ruth Johnston, NRW

Fraser McAuley, CLA

James Ruggeri, HCC

Edward Davies, NRW

Bronwen Martin, NRW

Bernard Griffiths, FUW

Chris Mills, WEL

Spencer Conlon, WG

Andrew Chambers, WG

Nichola Salter, NRW

Shane Thomas, CFF

Jamie McCoy, AHDB

Geraint Hamer, WG

Adriana Kiss, WG

Liz Franks, Hafren Dyfrdwr

**Additional Attendees Present:**

Jeremy Walters, NRW (Item 6 only)

**Secretariat:**

Bronwen Martin, NRW

**Apologies:**

Kate Snow, United Utilities

Matt Lowe, NRW

Katy Simmons, NRW

Delyth Lewis-Jones, AHDB

Einir Williams, FC

## **Item 1 Introductions, Apologies and Declaration of Interest**

1. Zoe Henderson welcomed all to the Microsoft Teams meeting noting apologies.
2. The Chair welcomed Bernard Griffiths, FUW back to the group. The Chair introduced Bronwen Martin, NRW as the new Secretariat for the group. Bronwen gave the group a brief summary of her background.
3. No declarations of interest were raised in respect of Agenda items to be considered.
  - 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 the last meeting and any matters arising**

4. The Group reviewed the minutes from the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 meeting and approved as a true record.
5. The Chair reviewed the Action Log, and the following comments were made:

- December AP07: Identify priority catchments and priority recommendations for those areas prior to the January meeting (NRW).
  - *This is an agenda item for today's meeting and will be discussed with Farming Connect (Item 4).*
- December AP10: Set up task and finish group to progress Water Standard (Ed Davies, NRW).
  - *Ed advised that this will be actioned this coming week and will be contacting all involved shortly.*
- December AP11: Invite a representative of WG to the sub group to discuss the Clean Air Plan and potential Water Regulations (RV).
  - *Marc Williams, NRW suggested asking Simon Bareham, NRW to discuss the Clean Air Plan and invite a representative from Welsh Government to join the next meeting. Nichola Salter said that Welsh Government are currently consulting on the Clean Air Bill with comments to be submitted by 7th April 2021 – the link to the Welsh Government consultation page is below:*

<https://gov.wales/white-paper-clean-air-wales-bill>

**AP01 January: Marc Williams, NRW to invite Simon Bareham, NRW and a Welsh Government representative to the next meeting to discuss the Clean Air Plan.**

- December AP12: KS to circulate comms paragraph explaining the membership and role of the WLMF sub group.
  - *Katy Simmons, NRW was unable to join today's meeting but Ed Davies, NRW advised that this will be actioned prior to the next meeting.*
- December AP13: KS to speak to AHDB to see what work has already been carried out in this area.
  - *Ed mentioned that Katy has sent an email to AHDB to discuss engagement work they have done with farmers, to understand what their preferred method of communication to ensure we contact them in an appropriate way. Jamie McCoy, AHDB advised that they have carried out some research regarding farmer engagement and how to inspire change and is happy to help.*
- December AP14: ZH to prepare a newsletter piece for the NFU column explaining the sub group plans for the year.
  - *This is an agenda item for today's meeting (Item 5).*
- December AP15: Identify topics for upcoming months and prepare articles for circulation (ALL).
  - *This is an agenda item for today's meeting (Item 5).*

- December AP16: Update on Ammonia Screening Guidance consultation within the January meeting.
  - *Jeremy Walters, NRW will be joining the meeting today to provide an update (Item 6).*
- AP November: SJ to share case study from the Brecon Beacons Mega Catchment and maize undersowing projects.
  - *Sarah Jones, Dwr Cymru mentioned that this has not progressed, although it is likely that it will be part of the work to share information. Some of the Sub Group members also sit on the stakeholder group for the Brecon Beacons Mega Catchment and a stakeholder meeting was held last week. The maize undersowing project in North Wales is still within early stages and still trying to find the farmer to do that work. It was agreed that this AP will be marked as complete, with relevant updates communicated to the group in future.*

*The Chair discussed that there are a number of farmers in North Wales that are undersowing maize. Geraint Llyr Davies, NRW mentioned that there is a farmer in Wrexham that had undersown his maize last year which was a great success and that it would be worth asking him if he would be willing to collaborate with the group. Sarah Jones, Dwr Cymru said that it would be helpful to share contact details. Sarah Hetherington, NRW mentioned that there was an Agrisgôp group on the Trothy that have been looking into this. Nichola Salter, NRW also said the Trothy under sown maize project work was through Farming Connect and the Wye and Usk Foundation (WUF) have also done a lot of work in Herefordshire and may be worth looking at the 'lessons learnt'.*

**AP02 January: Geraint Llyr Davies, NRW to share the contact details for the farmer in Wrexham with Sarah Jones, Dwr Cymru.**

- AP November: RJ to give update on River Basin Management Plans to the group.
  - *Ed provided the group with some information prior to the meeting. This will also be discussed today by Ed and Ruth (Item 4).*
- July AP04: RV to catch up with KS regarding compliance on representative farms in the Dee catchment.
  - *Marc contacted Kate Snow, United Utilities last week to arrange a meeting to discuss any future projects on the Dee and whether United Utilities would be willing to provide funding.*

**AP03 January: Marc Williams, NRW to update the group on the outcome of the upcoming meeting with Kate Snow, United Utilities.**

- July AP11: SC to send information to MW to circulate about waste plastics.
  - *The Chair mentioned that there is an overall concern regarding waste plastics and that there is a new company in Wales picking up from farms.*

*Geraint Llyr Davies, NRW mentioned that Birch Farm Plastics have started to collect from farms again which is a positive step forward. Creighton Harvey, CCP advised that the latest edition of the NFU magazine 'Farming Wales', has an article regarding Birch Plastics starting collections. Sarah Hetherington, NRW also mentioned a December 2020 publication in 'Gwlad' magazine discussing farm plastics, which has been raised with NRW waste colleagues and there will be a future update regarding the route of disposal.*

**AP04 January: Ed Davies, NRW to look into waste plastics and collate information to send out to the group.**

- December AP08: Acquire definitions for Wales Incident Response System (WIRS) categories and circulate (MW).
  - *Marc has looked into this and has provided information within the update paper. There are no distinct definitions for each of the categories regarding root cause and it is the officers judgment that determines the root cause and is based on their own evidence from attending the incident and undertaking their investigation, taking into account the source and cause of the incident.*
  - *Marc outlined that the Wales Incident Response System (WIRS) that NRW uses was originally designed for the root cause field for Industrial Regulation Team. Chris Mills queried whether the system should be updated as it is based on a different regulatory regime, which would allow for correct and accurate reporting of agricultural incidents. Marc confirmed that the system has been adapted to include some additional fields, but it is down to the individual officer based on the investigation, to determine what the root cause is for example 'maintenance failure' or 'management failure'. The Chair asked whether this system is meeting the needs of the agricultural team. Marc clarified that there are multiple fields available for the officers to apply but currently there are no definitions provided to help determine for example what a 'maintenance failure' is. Hopefully in the future definitions or more detail of the 'types' of failure included within the categories can be developed.*

6. Ed asked whether there are any comments or questions regarding the action points, no new comments were discussed.
7. The Chair advised that the group will now be taking a new approach in the form of an update paper. The purpose of the update paper is to inform members regarding ongoing projects and updates, which is to be issued prior to the meetings and can then be briefly discussed in meetings. If greater scrutiny of any of the topics within the update paper are needed, this is to be highlighted ahead of the next meeting and included in the agenda to allow for suitable allocation of time. This new approach aims to help the meetings be more action focussed and more productive. The group agreed to the new update paper approach.
8. Sarah Jones, DCWW requested that the update paper is circulated a week before the meeting so that points can be followed up and actioned ahead of the meeting. Ed and Bronwen agreed that this is reasonable. Sarah Hetherington explained that if the

updates are submitted to members a week earlier, actions and responses from the members are also required sooner.

9. Chris Mills, WEL queried pollution incident data and asked how much analysis is being done on the agricultural pollution data, the robustness of the data and how has the measurement of the data changed over the years. If agriculture pollution is to be prevented, we need to make the best use of the data we already have on past pollution incidents. Marc clarified that all of the data NRW has regarding the pollution incident data is from incidents reported by the public to NRW and is categorised by the system through NIRS and WIRS. The data is then substantiated by NRW officers to see if and where the incident has occurred. Statistical analysis has been undertaken and in the past it has been sent to a statistician to look at whether there were any correlations, particularly regarding weather and weather patterns. It is difficult to compare the whole of Wales, so specific analysis was undertaken for Carmarthenshire, but this was not explored further due to lack of resources at the time. The data in current graphs just shows the number of substantiated incidents reported to NRW. Chris Mills, WEL suggested that more could be done as it is fundamental to learn more about past and ongoing incidents in order to prevent future occurrences. Zoe and Marc agreed that it is an ongoing challenge and welcomed any information or suggestions on this topic. Chris suggested a meeting with Marc to develop ideas and discuss further.

***AP05 January: Marc Williams, NRW and Chris Mills, WEL to further discuss pollution incident data.***

10. The Chair asked whether there were any updates on the Dairy Project and asked if officers are not visiting farms, what were they doing. Marc mentioned he had spoken to Matt Lowe, NRW and they are contacting farmers, providing support and updating reports. Creighton, Marc and Bob are due to have a meeting later today which may have a cross over with this topic and will feed back to the group with relevant information.
11. Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru asked for an update regarding the agricultural pollution statistics and asked when the final figures for 2020 are likely to be provided. Marc provided a graph in the update paper which includes all of the data to the end of 2020 with the exception of a few reports that are still 'open' from December 2020. NRW hope to have the updated figures in the next few weeks for the whole of 2020.

### **Item 3 Priority Recommendations Actions**

12. Marc Williams, NRW shared his screen so that each Priority Recommendation Action could be discussed. Specifically identifying the lead and supporting members and the timescale to achieve these actions. Marc confirmed that this spreadsheet will be a live document which will be updated, amended and actions added over time.
13. **Recommendation 3.1:** WLMF to commission further analysis of the root cause of agricultural pollution working with a wider range of stakeholders. This in-depth analysis will benefit the work of group in the longer term by continuing to build a common understanding of the direct and indirect causes of pollution.

## **Actions:**

- Deliver the Nutrient Loading Project: specification has been put to WG and they have sent it to their subcontractor who have provided a quote to deliver the work. This work has been divided into three packages; Work Package 1, Work Package 2 and Work Package 3. Welsh Government are currently establishing whether funding is available for Work Packages 1 and 2 but NRW have not yet received an update. Should funding not be available for this work, an unfunded burdens bid will be explored to fund the work going forward.

### ***AP06 January: Marc Williams, NRW to send the application information to Spencer Conlon, Welsh Government for him to look into and provide an update from Soil Policy.***

- Collate water quality Research and Development projects that have explored root causes of agricultural pollution: Marc Williams and Geraint Hamer to meet and discuss this work
- Project work to understand the full scale of the root causes: The Chair asked whether this is linked to the collection of data and whether it needs to be explored further, for example understanding the 'other' agricultural sources used by officers investigating agricultural pollution incidents. Marc mentioned that there are some 'unknowns' and perhaps we need to collate the different issues and root causes. Creighton Harvey, CFF discussed that this goes back to the previous issue that it is the amount of available land and the amount of nutrient being produced, looking at the figures to see where incidents have been identified and then looking at the cause as to whether it was defective infrastructure, old infrastructure that is now not appropriate in accordance with modern regulations or poor management. It was agreed that time, effort and resources should be used to deliver the Nutrient Loading Project. Chris Mills, WEL mentioned that land use management and soil erosion should also be considered due to the increasing evidence suggesting phosphate loading increase is linked to an increase in soil erosion. Marc mentioned that Ed is looking at the use of LiDAR to assess land management risks and soil erosion.

### ***AP07 January: Marc Williams, NRW to group the root causes action to be grouped with the Nutrient Loading Project.***

- Exploring baseline of or barriers to behavioural changes: FC have carried out some work on this but wanted to bring this to the group to move forward. Jamie McCoy, AHDB advised they have information related to behavioural change and are willing to support FC to deliver this action.
- Analysis on the engagement with farmers and landowners in FC catchments: this was initially explored by FC within two catchments

### ***AP08 January: Marc Williams, NRW and Ed Davies, NRW to liaise with Lee Price, Farming Connect to explore applying this to other catchments***

- Catchment project work on the Dee to gather evidence of root causes: Marc and Kate Snow, United Utilities are meeting to explore this further. Similar projects

were undertaken in England with the EA so it would be good to understand what they propose and would like to get out of these projects.

- Collate a list of all issues collected from the Dairy Project: Marc has spoken to Matt Lowe, NRW and asked whether some of the Dairy Officers can collate some of the issues encountered and then establish how they can be addressed. Nichola Salter suggested that perhaps all issues need to be collated not just those related to the Dairy Project, for example officers are looking at poultry units and pig units in Mid Wales.

**14. Recommendation 4.7:** Based on the prior preparation of a clear risk analysis, the appropriateness of an EPR intensive farming approach, most likely for larger dairy units should be explored by the sub-group, Welsh Government & NRW in the context of a wider integrated review of the regulatory landscape. Elements from the existing regime for pigs and poultry should be considered, with new measures according to need.

**Actions:**

- Development of new schemes and review of regulatory framework: Marc outlined that England have got an EPR group and perhaps it needs to be explored from a Wales context. Creighton mentioned that there is a concern regarding the potential benefits from an EPR approach to dairy farming and notes that it is important that the level at which scrutiny becomes increased is appropriate and realistic. A discussion and research are needed to establish what is an appropriate level to set in terms of the number of animals within the scheme. Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru asked for clarification as to whether EPR is currently being looked at by NRW. Nichola Salter, NRW confirmed that EPR is not currently looked at by NRW but there is a watching brief on what the EA are doing which is then fed back to Welsh Government to review.

**15. Recommendation 4.12:** More widely, the sub-group need to assess the contribution of soils to poor water quality and means to address this issue, drawing on the considerable evidence base developed as part of the River Basin Management Plan process.

**Actions:**

- Evidence is needed to identify the risk of soil loss that is currently not on the WG Agricultural Land Classification report. Chris Mills, WEL mentioned that soil loss is an important topic in terms of siltation which impacts fish. Chris suggested that a review of existing research regarding siltation and impacts on fish in the form of a literature review. Sarah Hetherington reminded the group that work on sedimentation has already been carried out.

***AP09 January: Chris Mills, WEL to follow up and pass information to Ed Davies and Bronwen Martin, NRW***

***AP10 January: Sarah Hetherington, NRW to provide sedimentation information to Ed Davies and Bronwen Martin, NRW.***

- Share briefing/scoping of the Brecon Beacons Mega Catchment work: Sarah Jones, DCWW provided a brief outline of this work.

***AP11 January: Sarah Jones, DCWW to follow up and provide an update on the BBMC to the group.***

Dennis Matheson outlined the issue of trees and Tenant Farmers and explained that all trees belong to the Landlord and that a tenant cannot plant trees without permission.

- Investigating undersowing maize trials: Sarah Jones, DCWW to provide findings and information in order to help move this forward at a Wales level. Ed mentioned that if information can be provided regarding engagement and any barriers encountered so that it can be used as a 'lessons learnt' exercise.

***AP12 January: Sarah Jones, DCWW to provide information on undersowing maize trials to feed back to the group.***

- Explore modelling packages: Chris Mills, WEL said Afonydd Cymru uses Scimap in terms of agricultural farm visits and as a tool to provide advice on preventing pollution. Marc asked whether this can be explored to make modelling packages available for farmers to use. Chris Mills will share their experience of using this particular tool and the value of using it with the group. Nichola Salter mentioned that she had a conversation with an Environment Team Leader regarding an opportunity catchment and how mapping tools can be used to help direct effort. The Chair suggested holding a webinar regarding mapping tools to share knowledge. Sarah Hetherington suggested there is an opportunity for the catchments and integrate the portfolios with regards to SMNR. Geraint Llyr Davies asked whether there is potential to link this to the Dee Life Project work and the work undertaken by United Utilities so that there is limited additional cost involved.

***AP13 January: Chris Mills, WEL to share information regarding their experience of using modelling packages with the group.***

***AP14 January: Nichola Salter, NRW to provide an update to the group regarding mapping tools and the opportunity catchment work.***

***AP15 January: Marc Williams, NRW to discuss linking research data and information with Kate Snow, United Utilities and update the group.***

- A study on the extent and use of bioenergy crops in Wales: Marc explained that this is an 'evidence need' outlined in SoNaRR2020 and is to be explored further. The aim is to explore underlying issues with maize growing for bioenergy and soil loss risks. The group discussed the limitation of available data sources to facilitate this action.

***AP16 January: Bob Vaughan, NRW and Andrew Chambers, Welsh Government to discuss bioenergy crops further and feed back to the group.***

- Explore any evidence programmes within WG Soil Policy to deliver this work: Marc mentioned that a lot of work has already been undertaken and reports have been produced. NRW and WG to have a discussion with the policy teams to collate the evidence so that it is available for us to refer to.

***AP17 January: Bob Vaughan and Marc Williams, NRW to discuss evidence programmes further, prior to Bob's meeting with the Welsh Government Soils team.***

Geraint Llyr Davies, NRW discussed soil health in relation to soil nutrient plans and the need to move forward and develop it further. The group agreed that this could also be discussed with WG.

16. **Recommendation 6.1:** In the longer term, develop possible mechanisms which encourages engagement with advisory services and CPD potentially aligned with opportunities such as the development of Brand Wales or earned recognition.

**Actions:**

- Sustainable brand values: Sarah Hetherington provided a brief update based on a meeting with Welsh Government Food Policy last week. Some changes have been made to that programme where the Sustainable Brand Values part of the work has now moved across to the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) development and Agricultural White Paper development. Bob discussed NRW involvement in the WG Food Policy end of year Food Conference in Newport to increase engagement with producers and suppliers. The group briefly discussed the Red Tractor scheme and environmental standards. The Chair mentioned that the Red Tractor scheme is currently conducting a consultation and that members of the group may want to feed into that, the closing date is 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021:

<https://assurance.redtractor.org.uk/red-tractor-review-2021>

***AP18 January: Zoe Henderson, NRW to continue seeking communication with Red Tractor and invite them to a future meeting.***

Sarah Hetherington and Nichola Salter discussed working on, updating and aligning standards to help farmers.

***AP19 January: Work with Red Tractor, Water standards and FAWL to align standards and to help stop confusing farmers. (ALL)***

- Update and feedback on Lantra CPD skills Store: Marc has been in touch with Kevin Taylor, Lantra to provide information for the group but is awaiting a response. Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru mentioned that it is important to understand how this all links together, so the group does not repeat work being advanced by others. Rachel noted that NFU Cymru goes back to sources such as Cross Compliance, COGAP etc. for advice and provided a link to the group of a report referred to in the Agricultural White Paper:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/news/farmers-health-and-wellbeing-needs-to-be-at-the-centre-of-brexit-response-new-report/>

- Training or work packages for all organisations to provide consistent messages and advice to farmers: Marc asked the group to share their thoughts and perhaps help collate information and documents provided to farmers to investigate whether the messages are consistent. Chris Mills, WEL mentioned that it is not always 'what' but 'how' these messages are delivered. Rachel Lewis-Davies mentioned that NFU Cymru advocates for an NRW Farm Liaison Service (FLS) that replicates WG FLS team which are trusted by the farming community and there is a real opportunity for NRW to look at this model.

***AP20 January: Bronwen Martin, NRW to talk to the members of the group and gather information to find out what/how information and advice is delivered.***

17. Marc mentioned there are other actions on the Priority Recommendation spreadsheet but will send it out to members for them to review, make changes and suggest ways to move actions forward.

***AP21 January: Marc Williams, NRW to send the Priority Recommendation spreadsheet to members.***

## **Item 4 Review of Farming Connect Targeted Catchments**

18. Ed mentioned that NRW are reviewing which catchments FC to target but are unsure of how this can be delivered given the current circumstances and Covid restrictions. The group discussed whether to continue with the same approach by providing a list of priority catchments to FC or whether to ask them to pursue a Wales wide approach targeted through their webinars and podcasts, identifying specific topics to address in detail. Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru mentioned that it is difficult to say what method is preferred as farmers vary from business to business but NFU Cymru continue to hold virtual events which work for some and not others. Rachel said that there is room for national high-level messages as well as targeted catchment areas, but it is important to set out initial engagement in these areas. Ed and Rachel discussed whether farmers are likely to participate in virtual meetings and the level of uptake to discuss topics.

19. Nichola Salter, NRW mentioned that in response to press interest on poultry farming in Mid Wales, FC held a series of webinars which had a good level of uptake on the night. The sessions were also being recorded for those that could not attend and could access after.

20. Geraint Llyr Davies, NRW talked about his experience trying to get farmers to commit to one-to-one Zoom meetings to discuss matters. Some farmers are not happy to meet in this way and are missing out on a great opportunity therefore a farmer-friendly approach is needed to connect. Ed and Geraint discussed the potential and flexibility of online meetings and suggested that maybe the younger generation should help to encourage farmers to get on board. Bernard Griffiths, FUW said they have had good engagement from their members through Zoom meetings from all generations, but this might change as the evenings draw out. Sarah Jones, Dwr Cymru mentioned that there is a place for targeted engagement as well as a bank of messages made available to anyone across Wales at any time.

21. Ed shared his screen to show the group the FC targeted catchments and discussed areas of concern which need to be picked up on as priorities going forward. Ruth Johnston NRW, mentioned that priority catchments are being consulted on the river basin management plans at the moment and at the end of this calendar year, the opportunity catchments will supersede the priority catchments regarding the river basin management plans. NRW would like to come up with a cohesive plan with the group that meets as many opportunities as possible.
22. The group discussed the importance of consistent messages being communicated. Chris Mills, WEL mentioned that the Rivers Trust have been conducting a series of river habitat surveys over the past two years, and in doing so has observed a variety of different issues including agricultural pollution.

***AP22 January: Ed Davies, NRW to contact the Rivers Trust to discuss their survey observations regarding agricultural pollution.***

23. The Chair mentioned that this topic needs to be revisited at the next meeting when a representative from FC is present. Members to contact Ed if they have any information, evidence, issues or concern areas which tie into this topic.

## **Item 5 WLMF Sub Group Communications: Articles and Newsletters**

24. The Chair suggested that this agenda item is managed through an email conducted by Katy Simmons, NRW and Ed, prior to the next meeting.

## **Item 6 Ammonia Screening Update**

25. Jeremy Walters, NRW joined the meeting to provide an update on the GN020 Consultation. The consultation ran from May 2020 until the end of November 2020 with several meetings held to discuss issues and technical details. Jeremy provided an outline of the number of responses received which were grouped into 6 main categories; structure and clarity, maps, screening criteria, betterment, what guidance covers and general comments. The document will be a web-based series of pages which will take the applicant through the process. Jeremy advised that the final web version will be available in April 2021 at the earliest.
26. Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru asked Jeremy whether it would be possible to see the webpage written on Betterment. Jeremy agreed that he can share this information as soon as it has gone through the governance procedure.
27. Dennis Matheson, TFA asked how this is linked with the Clean Air Act. Jeremy advised that there is a drive in the Clean Air Act to reduce ammonia and this is part of the package to help achieve this.
28. Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru asked NRW to confirm that they are not applying the revised guidance until April 2021. Jeremy confirmed that NRW is not currently applying this guidance and are not going to apply it until April 2021 at the earliest.
29. Fraser McAuley, CLA asked whether a further update could be provided at a subsequent meeting on the transition and how developments have gone through the

governance procedures, so that everyone is clear on the possible changes. Jeremy agreed to provide further updates at subsequent meetings.

30. Rachel Lewis-Davies stated that NFU Cymru notes NRW's move towards a web-based approach but have concerns regarding version control of the web-based information and how it can be tracked. NFU Cymru note that businesses including farm businesses are making very costly decisions on the basis of the information provided on the NRW website and they are concerned that the information could be updated without making it clear. NRW needs to have a policy regarding version control so that it is made absolutely clear where and when documents are updated. NFU Cymru also note that the consultation hub has changed in the last three to four months to an online system of responses and conclude that this method does not work for membership organisations who draft responses based on their member contributions and circulate those responses for comment.
31. Jeremy mentioned that any changes made to maps within the document will be advertised three months prior. The evidence used to make any changes will also be posted.
32. Sarah Hetherington, NRW mentioned that there are some work programmes associated with the digital side of the agricultural remit within NRW and will feed back the comments made by Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru regarding version control.

***AP23 January: Sarah Hetherington and Marc Williams, NRW to take the version control comments to the Digital Team and feed back to the group.***

## **Item 7 AOB**

33. Fraser McAuley, CLA mentioned there has been some discussions regarding a water protection zone on the River Wye and would like to know what role NRW has had in this. Bob is aware of these discussions but is not directly involved but will look into it.

***AP24 January: Bob Vaughan, NRW to look into the water protection zone on the River Wye and feed back to the group.***

34. Rachel Lewis-Davies mentioned the recent report published by NRW on the phosphates in SAC rivers and would like to discuss this topic at another meeting, in order to understand the evidence and conclusions.

***AP25 January: Bronwen Martin, NRW to add an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss the phosphates in SAC rivers***

35. The Chair confirmed that the next Sub Group meeting is scheduled for Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.
36. The Chair thanked all of the members for their participation in moving things forward with greater clarity.

## **Close meeting**