

From: Hayley Deighton (Clun Strategic Liaison Group)

Date: 13 May 2025

To: Duncan Fulton (Chair SWT, Clun & BC Group)

Subject: RE: Resolution on River Clun - Clun and Bishops Castle Branch, Shropshire Wildlife Trust

Duncan

As promised and following the Strategic Clun Liaison Group meeting last week, please see below coordinated response and update from the Liaison Group partners.

In terms of recent, current and future projects delivered by Natural England and others through the Clun Protected Sites Strategy Pilot a number of activities are underway or have already been completed:

- ***Peatland, soil and hydrological mapping in the catchment headwaters.*** This is a partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Shropshire Hills National Landscape. Sixteen farmers participated, all receiving individual reports. An end of project event was held in Feb successful with 11 farms represented. Seven are keen for ongoing communication about funding and other project opportunities with partners and Catchment Sensitive Farming advice. Our next steps are to continue conversations with interested farmers and explore a range of funding mechanisms that could support delivery of their report's recommendations.
- ***Project FINCH (Facilitating Investment in Natural Clun Habitats).*** This was delivered in partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Seventeen farmers signed up across 21 sites. Farmers received an ecological audit of their field parcels and an assessment of the land's investment potential. A green finance specialist then assessed what opportunities each farm may have to access green finance. Farmers received individual reports and 1:1 discussion. An end of project event for participating farmers was held at the end of March. Our next steps are to run the project again for a new cohort of farmers from across the catchment, and explore potential next steps towards delivery with those who took part this year.
- ***Catchment Sensitive Farming led suite of local events and workshops.*** This have been roughly one every 2-3 months. These will continue in 2025 as they have been popular. Topics are based on feedback forms completed by farmers. Topics have included Herbal Leys/ Rotations/Companion Cropping, Water Quality, and Aeration and Soil Sampling. Attendance has been as high as 111 farmers – on Higher Tier and Sustainable Farming Incentive.
- ***Nature Recovery Blueprint.*** This will explore potential options/scenarios for the restoration of nature across the catchment. It will not be a 'plan' of the only way things can be done, but instead a set of scenarios where different measures are used in different ways and with different outcomes. We are currently finalising project specification and exploring suitable contractors. There has been a delay due to procurement challenges, but hoping to procure in coming months.

For Severn Trent Water:

- ***The 2014 nutrient management plan*** identified a need to reduce phosphate in the Clun SAC by 75%. On this basis, Severn Trent Water made provision within its AMP6 business plan (2015-2020) to reduce phosphate loads from its sewage works by a minimum of 75%. This was also captured as an obligation in our AMP6 NEP (National Environment Programme). To deliver this, phosphate removal processes were installed at Clun, Lydbury North, Aston on Clun and Newcastle on Clun sewage works. existing phosphate removal at Bucknell was upgraded to deliver enhanced removal. All of these upgrades were completed by March 2018 and are delivering more than the 75% reduction objective. A further phosphate removal process upgrade has since been delivered at Bishops Castle sewage works

(commissioned in March 2025), and we are investigating options for further phosphate removal at this site. Following completion of the upgrades outlined above, sewage treatment works are now only a minor contributor of phosphate to the Clun catchment and scope for any further reductions is very limited.

For Shropshire Council:

- ***The River Severn Partnership Advanced Wireless Innovation Region*** is piloting innovative work in the Clun Catchment to deploy digital sensors and explore mitigation options using the Council highway drainage network. This is allowing us to monitor the impact of sediment traps on highway outfalls. Further information on this and the wider Innovation Region work is available on the River Severn Partnership website: [Wireless water quality monitoring established for river that's home to freshwater pearl mussels | River Severn Partnership](#)

I hope this is a useful update but do please come back to us with any further questions. We will be happy to keep you updated following further meetings and as work progresses.

With best wishes
Hayley