

Lower Windrush Valley Project Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Background

The Lower Windrush Valley covers 28 square kilometres of West Oxfordshire, incorporating the floodplain of the River Windrush from Witney to where it joins the River Thames at Newbridge. Over the last 60 years the landscape character of the valley has been transformed by mineral extraction with large areas of the riverside pasture transformed into a mosaic of open water.

With mineral extraction set to continue for years to come the Lower Windrush Valley Project (LWVP) was created by Oxfordshire County Council to create and implement an environmental strategy for this area.

Since 2001, the LWVP has employed one Project Officer who works with many environmental organisations, mineral operators, landowners and the local community to co-ordinate, deliver and help manage a wide range of initiatives that aim to:

- Strengthen and develop the evolving landscape of the valley
- Protect and enhance the biodiversity it supports
- Improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside
- Raise awareness, understanding and involvement in the diverse issues that influence the environment in the valley

The Lower Windrush Valley Project is currently funded and supported by Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, and Smith & Sons (Bletchington) Ltd.

Purpose of the LWVP Steering Group

In 2016 the LWVP Steering Group accepted a proposal put forward by the Project Manager to make changes to the Steering Group and create a Technical Advisory Group. These Terms of Reference relate to the Steering Group as of September 2016.

The purpose of the Steering Group is to oversee project activities and resources, and to provide guidance to the Project Manager in delivering the LWVP Strategy.

Role of the LWVP Steering Group

The role of the LWVP Steering Group is to:

- Set project priorities
- Monitor project activities against the strategy
- Be responsible for monitoring the use of project resources
- Link project work to developments, issues and opportunities in the Lower Windrush Valley area and wider world
- Be a key part of the decision making process. As opportunities come forward they will be channelled through the Steering Group for a focused approach to gathering and shaping views



- If necessary, provide guidance to Oxfordshire County Council on continuing feasibility of LWVP and staffing

Role of LWVP Steering Group members

LWVP Steering Group members will:

- Represent the interests of one or more project stakeholders
- Be an advocate for the project's outcomes
- Consider ideas and issues raised
- Review the progress of the project
- Provide guidance to the Project Manager
- Use their skills and knowledge to benefit the work of the project
- Participate in LWVP Steering Group Meetings

Membership

The LWVP Steering Group will be comprised of stakeholders who are able to represent the interests of the wider community and individuals who are able to provide advice on the long term management of the project. Initially members will be drawn from the existing Steering Group and new members will be accepted by majority agreement.

Membership will normally last for three years at which point members are eligible for reappointment.

The meeting chair will be nominated by Oxfordshire County Council and secretariat will be provided by the LWVP Project Manager.

Agenda Items

All LWVP Steering Group agenda items must be forwarded to the Project Manager at least 10 working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

The LWVP Steering Group agenda, with attached meeting papers will be distributed at least 3 working days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

Minutes & Meeting Papers

The minutes of each LWVP Steering Group meeting will be prepared by the Project Manager.

Full copies of the Minutes shall be provided to all LWVP Steering Group members no later than 15 working days following each meeting.

Frequency of Meetings

The LWVP Steering Group shall meet twice per year in March and September.

Review Timetable

The LWVP Steering Group role and membership should be reviewed annually in March to ensure continuing effectiveness.