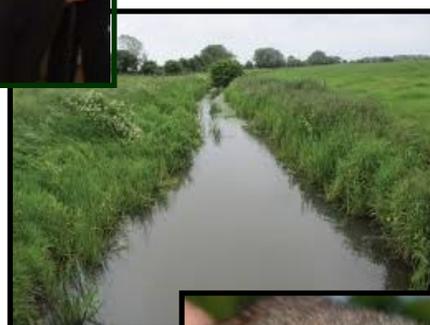


Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands Evaluation Plan



by
Resources for Change
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INTRODUCTION

Evaluation has two purposes – proving and improving. **Proving** means demonstrating that change is actually taking place. When viewed as an **improving** exercise, evaluation is part of a continuous process of learning and development¹. This document lays out the framework for monitoring the work and evaluating the impact of the Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands Project (FLOW). The evaluation process is designed to:

- Meet evaluation requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and project partners.
- Understand what difference the Project has made, in particular in terms of tangible ecological and heritage impacts, and community engagement.
- Provide information as the Project is being delivered to inform its ongoing management and delivery, suggesting adaptations if required and building on what is working well.
- Enable the Project to demonstrate accountability to the community, by showing that the money is being spent well and the Project is being delivered effectively.
- Build up a body of evidence to demonstrate to partners, funders and others what works, in order to inform future work.

This approach to evaluation will rely on a combination of work by project staff, partners, volunteers and a commissioned external evaluator. It will be vital to embed monitoring and evaluation activities within day-to-day working, but also to include external, objective input at key points. The project staff will be responsible for on-going monitoring of activities, e.g. participant satisfaction, and will work with the project manager to carry out internal annual reflective reviews, while the external evaluators will design and deliver two evaluations.

The Projects team are required to provide quarterly quantitative data returns to HLF relating to financial spend and achievement of targets. The monitoring described in this framework will contribute towards these requirements, but is focused on providing additional material that will help to ‘tell the qualitative story’ behind the numbers. The two externally run evaluations will draw on summaries of the quarterly data reporting, but will focus on the additional information with the intention of providing qualitative depth to Evaluation process.

This Evaluation Plan has been put together by Mike King of Resources for Change (www.r4c.org.uk) using the following methodology:

- Review of project documentation
- Familiarisation visit
- Stakeholder workshop to help determine the key evaluation topics (see appendix for workshop report)
- Meeting with Project Manager to determine outputs & outcomes
- Discussion with the FLOW Management Committee.

¹ HLF Evaluation – Good Practice Guidance 2012

WHAT IS BEING EVALUATED

The Evaluation needs to ‘prove’ how the FLOW project has achieved what it sets out to accomplish in terms of outputs and outcomes.

The FLOW project is addressing the following heritage need

The Manhood Peninsula’s current environmental condition outside the protected area is badly degraded. The network of wetlands, a key local habitat, needs enhancement and linking up to improve habitat connectivity for wildlife and to strengthen the area’s resilience to increased flood risk which is a key issue for local people.

The Flow project plans to undertake a programme of activities the results of which (in terms of outputs and outcomes) will address that heritage need

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
Recruit & train a team of volunteers to initially undertake survey work and then to support practical implementation	No. of volunteers No. new to project Profile of volunteers (gender, ethnicity, age, profession) No. trained in survey work Volunteer satisfaction and benefit (learning, health, enjoyment, employment prospects)	A larger number of local people actively engaged in action for wildlife New audiences engaged in the wetland environment People having learnt new skills and gained personally from their involvement in the project
Undertake ditch, pond and hedgerow survey’s in 9 parishes on land owned by the largest landowners	% of ditches, ponds and hedgerows assessed in each parish No. of Landowners engaged with	Increased knowledge about the best recording and mapping techniques to use
Create baseline ‘condition assessment’ reports & maps for each parish and landowner	No. of reports produced Consolidated ‘overview’ report produced	Greater knowledge on the condition of local habitats among decision makers, landowners and the community
Use the information gained from the survey work to ground truth and update the green infrastructure maps for the Manhood Peninsula	Maps updated and shared with CDC for: Water vole network Bat/ Hedgerow network Barn Owl habitat network	Greater knowledge on the condition of local habitats among decision makers, landowners and the community
Create a prioritised list of costed projects to improve the environmental value of the network and reduce flood risk in the most sustainable and natural way in each parish	For each parish (9) Identify ditches that need some management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission gained, money raised, action taken Identify relic ponds that can be improved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission gained, money raised, action taken 	A forward plan for the Manhood’s wetland network and management Well-functioning ditch network improving habitat connectivity and reducing future flood risk

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Activity	Outputs	Outcomes
Establish community groups to continue to implement improvements and monitor the networks, covering all parishes (or taken on by Parish Councils), help them access funds, expertise and resources	No. of groups established No. of volunteers Group activity	A larger number of local people actively engaged in action for wildlife New audiences engaged in the wetland environment People taking responsibility and positive action to managing their water courses and managing them better
Actively assist the implementation of a number of the high priority projects to be completed as Case Studies	No. of case studies achieved Use of those case studies	Well-functioning ditch network improving habitat connectivity and reducing future flood risk
Volunteer group established to monitor mink, with plans for control in place	Group established No. of volunteers No. of Mink rafts monitored	A larger number of local people actively engaged in action for wildlife
Increasing the understanding by key groups and individuals [primarily landowners] of how to manage habitats to enhance biodiversity and/or reduce flooding and their riparian ownership responsibilities	Number of: communities/landowners/flood groups in receipt of advice from the project Talks given Events attended	Better understanding as to who is responsible for what in respect to wetland management and conservation. People know how to react/ who to talk to when problems occur People, including landowners, taking responsibility and positive action to managing their water courses and managing them better
Develop basic guidelines, aimed at residents and small landowners, about how improvements could be made to ditches, ponds and hedgerows, for distribution to households in the target parishes and available to individuals & groups in the wider community	Guidelines produced Number distributed Feedback received	Landowners managing land in a more responsible way Local people better informed about the role of wetlands and their impact on them both positive and negative People, including landowners, taking responsibility and positive action to managing their water courses and managing them better
Run a series of events in parishes where the project is working. Use events to increase understanding, promote good practice, consult on plans and obtain feedback	No. of events run No. attending Profile of those attending Feedback from those attending	Local people better informed about the role of wetlands and their impact on them both positive and negative

Key Evaluation Topics

As well as proving that it has delivered effectively, the FLOW project also wants to learn from the implementation of the project to help improve its and others practice in wetland heritage conservation.

The MHWG and local stakeholders have identified aspects of the project process and likely impact that they would like to know more about as it proceeds. These Key Evaluation topics will guide what information is gathered through on-going monitoring and the evaluation interventions, and then used to frame the evaluation analysis.

- Achieving HLF intended outcomes:
 - Heritage will be – better managed, in better condition, identified/recorded
 - People will have – developed skills, learnt about heritage, volunteered time
 - For communities, environmental impacts will be reduced; more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage; the local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit
- How elements of the project's governance and ways of working contribute to achieving outcomes
- Wider benefits have come from the collaborative approach to delivering the FLOW project
- Better understanding what the barriers are to change in how people view, interact and manage wetlands
- What messages and activities contribute to achieving a greater level of community engagement?
- Landowners, managers and communities being able to sustain the wildlife and flood risk improvements beyond the life of the project
- Achieving influence beyond the project area

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

For an evaluation of this type to be successful there is a need for both quantitative and qualitative data to be collected throughout the projects delivery phase. This falls into three categories:

Activity Recording

- Recording what is being done and what outputs it's achieving
- Largely covering the outputs listed in the chart in section 2 above
- This is an ongoing process throughout the delivery phase
- Responsibility of the project team using tools provided by Evaluator

Evaluation Recording

- Obtaining feedback from people engaged in the project

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- For the Flow project this should be focussed on:
 - Volunteering – ongoing throughout project
 - Community engagement - ongoing throughout project
 - Wider stakeholders – one off exercise towards the end of the project
- Responsibility of the project team using tools provided by Evaluator

External Evaluation

- Developing a deeper understanding of the projects outcomes and impact
- For the Flow project it is proposed that two external evaluations are undertaken; the first one half way through the project delivery phase and the second at the end
- This will involve:
 - Review and analysis of the Activity & Evaluation Recording results
 - Meetings/ Interviews with Staff, key volunteers and Management Committee members
 - Stakeholder workshop
 - Producing both an interim and final evaluation report.
- Responsibility of the Evaluator

The Evaluation schedule overleaf shows which type of data collection mechanism relates to which key evaluation topic and who is responsible for its collection.

GREEN TEXT – monitoring activities which are the responsibility of the FLOW project team and partners

BLUE TEXT - evaluation activities which should be the responsibility of the external evaluation

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Evaluation Schedule

Outcome/ Key Topic	Activity Recording	Evaluation Recording	External Evaluation
HLF intended outcomes:			
Heritage will be – better managed, in better condition, identified/recorded			
Increased knowledge about the best recording and mapping techniques to use.	% of ditches, ponds and hedgerows assessed in each parish No. of Landowners engaged with		Interviews with staff & volunteers involved - Interim & Final evaluations
Greater knowledge on the condition of local habitats among decision makers, landowners and the community	No. of parishes mapped Maps updated and shared with CDC for: Water vole network Bat/ Hedgerow network Barn Owl habitat network		Stakeholder Evaluation workshop, asking these groups about what they have learnt - Interim & Final evaluations
A forward plan for the Manhood's wetland network and management	No. of condition reports produced Consolidated 'overview' report produced No. of parishes with prioritised list of projects In each parish: permissions gained, money raised, action taken		
People will have – developed skills, learnt about heritage, volunteered time			
A larger number of local people actively engaged in action for wildlife	No. of volunteers No. new to project Profile of volunteers		
New audiences engaged the wetland environment	No of volunteers No new to project Profile of volunteers		
People having learnt new skills and gained personally from their involvement in the project		No of volunteers trained Volunteer satisfaction and benefit (learning, health, enjoyment, employment prospects)	

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Outcome/ Key Topic	Activity Recording	Evaluation Recording	External Evaluation
For communities, environmental impacts will be reduced; more people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage; the local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit			
Well-functioning ditch network improving habitat connectivity and reducing future flood risk	Proportion of ditches in 'good condition' Green Infrastructure maps updated and shared with CDC for: Water vole network Bat/ Hedgerow network Barn Owl habitat network No of case studies achieved Use of those case studies	Landowner Feedback	
Local people better informed about the role of wetlands and their impact on them both positive and negative	Number of: communities/landowners/flood groups in receipt of advice from the project Talks given Events attended	Feedback forms at community events: How do people view wetlands, does this change through involvement with the project	Stakeholder Evaluation workshop, asking if people have seen a difference - Interim & Final evaluations
Better understanding as to who is responsible for what in respect to wetland management and conservation. People know how to react/ who to talk to when problems occur	Number of: communities/landowners/flood groups in receipt of advice from the project Guidelines produced/ distributed	Feedback forms at community events: What have people learnt about wetland management	Stakeholder Evaluation workshop, asking if people have seen a difference - Interim & Final evaluations
People, including landowners taking responsibility and positive action to managing their water courses and managing them better	No. of Landowners worked with No. of community groups established/ worked with Guidelines produced/ distributed Project Diary – observations and anecdotal evidence	Feedback forms at community events: Have people taken positive action or aware of others doing so	Stakeholder Evaluation workshop, asking if people have seen a difference - Interim & Final evaluations

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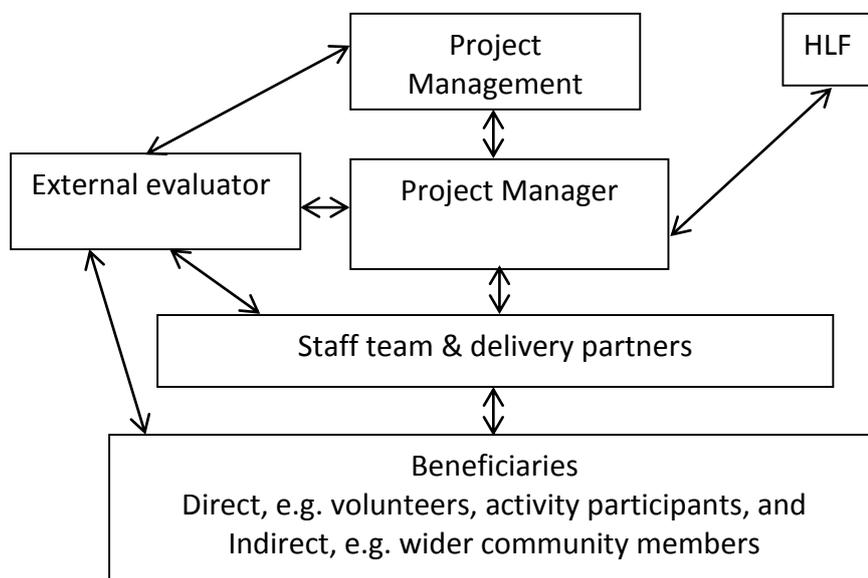
Outcome/ Key Topic	Activity Recording	Evaluation Recording	External Evaluation
FLOW Evaluation Key Topics			
How elements of the project's governance and ways of working contribute to achieving outcomes		End of project Stakeholder Survey to find out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths & weaknesses 	Interviews with staff & Management Committee involved. Stakeholder Evaluation workshop, asking if people about what has worked - Interim & Final evaluations
Wider benefits have come from the collaborative approach to delivering the FLOW project	Project Diary – observations and anecdotal evidence	End of project - Stakeholder Survey to find out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have been the benefits 	Interviews with staff & Management Committee involved. Stakeholder Evaluation workshop, asking if people have seen a difference - Interim & Final evaluations
Better understanding as what the barriers are to changing how people view, interact and manage wetlands	Project Diary – observations and anecdotal evidence	End of project - Stakeholder Survey to find out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has been learnt 	Interviews with staff & Management Committee. Stakeholder Evaluation workshop identifying what has been learnt - Interim & Final evaluations
What messages and activities contribute to achieving a greater level of community engagement?	Project Diary – observations and anecdotal evidence		Interviews with staff & Management Committee. Stakeholder Evaluation workshop, asking if people have seen a difference - Interim & Final evaluations
Landowners, managers and communities being able to sustain the wildlife and flood risk improvements beyond the life of the project	Project Diary – observations and anecdotal evidence	End of project - Stakeholder Survey to find out: How are things to be sustained	Interviews with staff & Management Committee
Achieving influence beyond the project area	Project Diary – observations and anecdotal evidence Recording no. of talks given, articles written, conferences attended, press releases produced		Interviews with staff & Management Committee

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Outcome/ Key Topic	Activity Recording	Evaluation Recording	External Evaluation

WHO IS INVOLVED - EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS

As a subset of the Project as a whole, it is possible to map the stakeholder's specific to the evaluation.



Evaluation stakeholders can further be considered in terms of the nature of their 'stake'. The table below presents an initial analysis which can be further developed and used as a 'live' reference during the lifetime of the Project.

Involved in running the evaluation & carrying out monitoring	Giving information	Interested in the results and learning
Project manager Staff team Partners Volunteers	Participants Volunteers Trainees Local community groups Local residents Local businesses Visitors Local organisations that aren't directly involved	Project manager & staff Partners Volunteers Trainees Funders HLF Monitor/ Mentor Press & media Elected members and Parish Councillors Other projects working to engage people with heritage and the outdoors Other landowners Behaviour change academics Local residents (active)

IMPLEMENTATING THE EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation comprises a mix of on-going monitoring and distinct evaluation interventions at interim and final points.

The Project manager will have lead responsibility for monitoring, with input from other project staff, partners and volunteers in order to carry out the on-going monitoring. The tools required to undertake this monitoring are contained in section 6 (below) of the Evaluation plan.

There will be quarterly data collation and analysis in order to compile required funder returns, and to enable the Project manager and partners to review progress and identify any emerging issues. **It is critically important that data collection is an ongoing process and is kept up to date.**

The two evaluation interventions will be contracted to an external contractor, who could also provide on-going mentoring support.

Interim evaluation Check on progress -
Are we heading in the right direction?
Are we beginning to have an impact? Is it the impact we're aiming for?
Are we doing it right?
What can we learn from our work so far to help us plan for the future, after the end of this HLF funding?

Final evaluation Impact, legacy and feedback to the community and funders -
What difference have we made?
Has this been the best way to achieve these outcomes?
What will sustain after the end of the funded project?

Budget for external Evaluation

The HLF second round bid should contain a figure of £4,620 (excluding VAT), for the delivery of the Interim & Final evaluations. This is made up of evaluator's time at a rate of £400 per day plus expenses, estimated at 5% of day rate, and is allocated in the following way:

Interim Evaluation	Days	Cost (£)
Review and analysis of activity and evaluation reporting	1	400
Meet with Staff, Key volunteers & committee members	1	400
Design and run stakeholder evaluation workshop	1.5	600
Produce evaluation report	1.5	600
Sub-total	5	2000
Expenses @5%		100
Total		£2100

Final Evaluation	Days	Cost (£)
Review and analysis of activity and evaluation reporting	1.5	600
Meet with Staff, Key volunteers & committee members	1	400
Design and run stakeholder evaluation workshop	1.5	600
Produce evaluation report	2	800
Totals	6	2400
Expenses @5%		120
Total		£2520

EVALUATION TOOL KIT

To support the evaluation process a toolkit has been developed that will help the project team collect the monitoring data and undertake the ongoing evaluation process. This covers the following:

- Activity Recording
 - Spreadsheet into which all output data is added in 10 categories; Habitat Surveys, Habitat Improvements, Landowners, Volunteer days, Community events, Training, Outreach, Media, Resources, Diary.
This spreadsheet is a rather large file and for that reason has not been incorporated into this document but is available from the FLOW Project Manager.
- Evaluation Recording - Survey monkey questionnaires covering:
 - Volunteer satisfaction
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/QVG3YZ2>
 - Community engagement
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/M2BD75Y>
 - Landowner feedback
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WH7G2BD>

These tools have been developed in discussion with the FLOW Development Officer and are held by her for use by the project team.

- Interim & Final Evaluations
 - Core questions

To inform the interim and final evaluations a core question set has been developed. These questions are designed to cover the key topics identified in the Evaluation Framework. In the interim and final evaluations they will be used help design the different facets of the

evaluation process, ensuring that the key topics are covered in all instances. The core questions will not always be used in the format below but will be customised to a particular stakeholder group or evaluation medium. They may also be refined as the project progress based on the experience of the evaluation process at that stage.

Impact

1. What difference do you think the Flow Project is making? *Thinking about the landscape and heritage, the organisations involved, the individuals who have got involved and the local communities.*
2. The FLOW Project has a number of aims. Based on your experience of the Project, how well is the project performing against each of these? *(We realise that you may not have experience or knowledge of all of these, just focus on those you are familiar with).*
3. Do you think that understanding and appreciation of Wetlands has increased during the life of the project? What has the Project done towards this?
4. Do you think the FLOW Project has been successful in reaching out to people who don't usually get involved? If so, in what way?

Delivery process

5. In your view, how well do you think the FLOW Project as a whole is being delivered? E.g. completing the work it is tasked with; the way the partner organisations work together.
6. Are there any particular things that have either helped or hindered the Project's work?

Legacy

7. From the changes that you have observed, what do you think the long-term benefits of the Project will be? What will remain after the end of HLF funding?
8. Have any new organisations or other stakeholders become actively involved in conserving, enhancing and increasing access to Wetlands as a result of this Project?
9. What would you like to see happen next in relation to Wetlands on the Manhood Peninsula

And finally,

10. What is the most significant difference that this Project has made to you/your organisation/your community group?

Appendix: Stakeholder Workshop Report

FLOW Project – Evaluation workshop Outputs

On the 9th November the FLOW Project hosted a workshop to inform the development of the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan being produced by Mike King of Resources for Change. Set out below is the output from the discussion sessions. Please note that a certain amount of editing has been done to avoid too much duplication.

Session 1: Who should we be speaking to when evaluating the FLOW PROJECT? (Beyond those people in the room)

- Abstraction Licensees
- Arun & Rother Connections
- Chichester District Council Land Drainage Officer
- Chartered Institute of Water Management
- Chichester Canal Trust
- Community Wardens
- CPRE
- Developers
- Emergency services
- Environment Agency
- Flood Groups
- Harbour Conservancy
- Horticultural Industry
- JNCC – about ditches & conservation issues involving water voles
- Landowners
- Local community
- Member of Parliament
- Natural England
- Neighbourhood Planning Groups
- NFU
- Organisations involved in 'going Dutch'
- Parish Councils
- Press/ TV
- Recreational users & special interest groups such as Horse Riders
- Residents Associations
- Schools
- Solent Forum
- South Downs National Park Authority, Wetlands Officer
- Southern Water
- Sussex Archaeological Society
- Sussex Marine & Coastal Forum
- Sussex Wildlife Trust

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- Tree Wardens
- Tourist business owners
- WSCC Highways, Emergency Planners, Councillors, Operation Watershed
- Universities/ College's
- Youth Groups

Session 2: What does success look like and how to measure it?

Success	Measurement
Reduction in flood risk events	Comparison with previous records Water used previously unavailable storage Reduction in flooding incidents at known flood risk sites Public acceptance of higher precept
Improve wildlife connectivity and habitats	Monitoring – water voles Bridging gaps in existing maps More people engaged in caring for wildlife Improved survey outcomes
Recognition of climate change and impact on people and wildlife	Local feedback Change in local policy Number of workshops run – evaluation sheets
Acceptance of individual responsibility for ditches and water management	Number of people managing own water/ ditches etc.
Community involvement - More people involved in action for wildlife and reducing flood risk	Numbers of volunteers, attendees at workshops
Awareness of the projects impacts/ success	Sampling
Environment looks more natural/ tidier/ more aesthetically pleasing	Photographic evidence
A forward plan for the Manhood's wetland network and management	Active flood action groups with a clearly defined role Agencies sign up; CDC, WSCC, PC's and voluntary groups
Landowners managing land in a more responsible way	Examples of land better managed % of Landowners engaged
All ditches and ponds surveyed & mapped/ analysed	Number of surveys/ length surveyed Action plans prepared
Communication	Distribution of newsletters Number of Web articles
Recognition/ Buy-in	Used as a national case study/ exemplar/ benchmark Local councils embrace the idea and translate this into policy and action Other areas/ groups adopt model

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Success	Measurement
People know how to react/ who to talk to when problems occur	No inappropriate ditch work Open clear lines of communication
Biodiversity increased / increase in protected species	Baseline surveys with follow up, targeted at specific flora and fauna (Diversity & numbers)
Well-functioning ditch network and a greater understanding of why that is important	Length of ditch/area Number of pools opened up Number of reservoirs put in % of ditches surveyed on peninsula Increased capacity in CUMECs Improved biodiversity
Community involvement & awareness	Public educated No conflict between flood relief and biodiversity More volunteers
Cleaner Countryside	Reduced fly tipping Decrease in number of derelict glasshouses – leads to better management of water run off
Engage younger people	Use of social media
Sustainability	Active ongoing management plan Owned by local people through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increased volunteer capacity b) Stakeholder meetings c) Effective outcomes
Funding obtained for additional work	Amount of funding

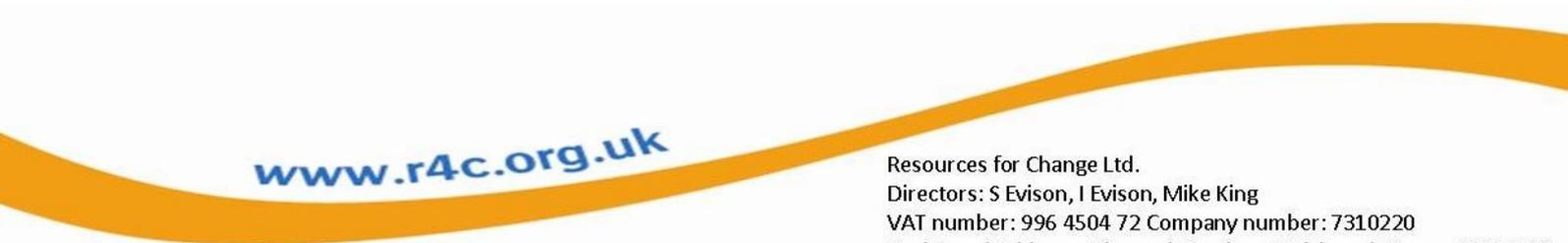
Session 3: What would you like to know more about through the Evaluation process?

Topic	Measurement
Where water goes	Measuring water levels at critical points Use of historical surveys
More effective ways of mapping	The number of people able to view mapping results How much of the peninsula is mapped
Parish Flood Groups	Taking ownership of ongoing maintenance
Incorporation of environmental features into Neighbourhood plans	How many
Understanding what are the barriers to change	Surveys
Which species would benefit most? Understanding the most appropriate biodiversity for the area and national priorities	Strategic process Biological Records centre will have records

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Topic	Measurement
Where the money has gone	Financial reports
Use of other funding streams	Increased match funding resulting in more projects
Progress in terms of area mapped/ surveyed	Accessible data – ease of access
How wildlife is using the network	Research, survey's monitoring
Ground truthing historic data; how the environment used to work in the past	Compare and contrast with present data
Where are the flood events, how does the system work or not	Info on flood events/ problems
Land ownership and responsibility	Contact details
Number of people needed for the project & jobs identified	List of tasks, volume of data
How wildlife uses the habitat	Taking surveys/ mapping
Feedback of information	Comparability
Changes in agriculture & horticulture and how this might impact the wetland system	Diversity awareness
Future Management	Making people aware of the need
Impact on policies	Policy review and change
How to involve stakeholders and their views	Numbers engaged and communication
Understanding geology	Impacts flood risk
Impact of Climate Change	Predictions
Who does what?	Assigning responsibility
Communication channels – what works what does not	No duplication
Good practice standards	Know who to talk to
Unknown Unknowns – plans that may impact work e.g. developers	Liaison with Planning Authorities
Adjacent projects e.g. Solent & other counties	Adopt best practice

Thank you to all those who participated in the discussion. This material will now be used to inform the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan.



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