

**Date: Wednesday, 11 May 2022**
**Time: 10am – 11.30am**
**Venue: via Microsoft Teams call**

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
David Andrews (DA)	VisitWiltshire	✓
Charlotte Boole (CB)	Greenway Training	✓
Rory Bowen (RB)	Wiltshire Council	✓
Sarah Dyke (SD)	Wiltshire Council	
Julian Head (JH)	Wiltshire Council	✓ - joined the meeting at 11.05am
Ruth Lambert (RL)	FSB	✓
Geraldine McKibben (GMck)	Consultant	
Gary Mantle (GM)	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Apologies
Thomas Mason (TM)	CLA	Apologies
John Matthews (JM)	Pinkney Park	✓
James Miles-Hobbs (JM-H)	JMH Farming and Renewables	✓
Andy Parsons (AP)	Cotswolds AONB	Apologies
Harry Tipple (HT) / Alex Neale (AN)	Community First	✓ AN
Paul Walton (PW)	New Forest NPA	Apologies
Caroline Wheatley-Hubbard (CW-H)	Boyton Farm	✓ - joined the meeting at 11am
Edward Humber (EH)	NFU	✓
Claire Wright (CW)	CLA	
<b>SWLEP: attendance will be dependent on topics discussed</b>		
Paddy Bradley (PB)	SWLEP CEO	✓
Debby Skellern (DS)	SWLEP	Apologies

Name of Member	Organisation	Attendance
Chris Stevens (CS)	SWLEP	✓
<b>Guest(s)</b>	Paul Coles ✓ and Rob Passmore ✓ – South West Business Council – left the meeting at 10.55am Nigel Stone ✓	
<b>Chair</b>	Paddy Bradley (PB)	
<b>Notes</b>	Deborah House (DKH)	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b>	
	The meeting opened at 10am. PB welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions made. Apologies were noted.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Minutes from 2 February 2022</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	The minutes from the meeting on 2 February 2022 were read and approved.	
<b>2.2</b>	<p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DKH to send email to TM to ascertain status of the Rural Productivity All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG). <b>ON AGENDA. See Item 4.0.</b></li> <li>Natural Capital: no estimation given of the extent of quality of habitats. <i>Response: value of initial stock was cited and would be expanded later in the study. Environmental quality would be factored in and captured.</i> PB to follow up with GM. <b>COMPLETED. Update: Parsa Mohammadpour had completed his assessment for his PhD on Natural Capital and would continue to progress. This element would come into the study later.</b></li> </ul> <p>The other Matter Arising was completed.</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>The Biosphere Foundation</b>	
	<p>Paul Coles and Rob Passmore from the South West Business Council spoke to the meeting and Rob outlined the work of the Biosphere Foundation in helping farmers to access information on the natural capital marketplace. The Foundation was a not-for-profit organisation.</p> <p>The presentation can be accessed by following the link below.</p>	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
	<p><a href="https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/2022/11-may-22/biosphere-rural-economy-sector-group-(swlep)-briefing.pdf?sfvrsn=2b79d2c4_4">https://static.swlep.co.uk/swlep/docs/default-source/sub-groups/business-development/rural-economy-sector-group-(resg)/2022/11-may-22/biosphere-rural-economy-sector-group-(swlep)-briefing.pdf?sfvrsn=2b79d2c4_4</a></p> <p>The format of the Biosphere Foundation is such that the product can be used in other geographies and had significant Government support. The aim was to keep independent farmers afloat and help them to steward their land, as the majority of farmers would struggle to understand this new area and to implement the changes necessary. The Foundation would help them to do that and to take advantage of these new revenue opportunities across their land. New employment opportunities, such as data analytics and monitoring as secondary careers, and completely new job opportunities in the green economy could be open to them.</p> <p>The Foundation worked with individual farmers to offer a bespoke service, matching project intervention to the farmer. The demonstration offered took 90 minutes and the Foundation would be happy to have further conversations with anyone that was interested. Ecosystem services were not just about carbon. Carbon and biodiversity net gain were tradable. Although there was no soil standard as yet, this was being worked on to create a standard for soil carbon. Planting trees and restoring peatlands could gain incentives. Woodland and peat land could raise carbon credits. The Foundation was also working with Defra for Soil Association Exchange and a Saltmarsh code.</p> <p>CB stated that economic development led to jobs, and a potential increase in skills needs, so expanding skills offerings was essential. The Foundation had already been working with Devon Council to map the current skills provision and ascertain the skills gaps across its economy. Environmental skills were in short supply. Skills analysis for the green economy was available and RP would share with the group.</p> <p><b>Action: RP to provide the skills analysis to DKH for onward distribution.</b></p> <p>PB advised of the Green Skills report which had come out of the Skills &amp; Talent Subgroup and the Working Group which had been established to draft a plan of action. The report showed good opportunities for new types of jobs within the green economy. PB asked whether CB wanted to be involved.</p> <p><b>Action: Skills &amp; Talent Working Group draft green skills report to be sent to CB for input.</b></p> <p>EH advised the meeting that farmers had the fear of being the first to do things, but the presentation had been well-received by Devon farmers at their meeting. They needed to put down a marker and move forward. This was a slow process to get the uptake but there was a huge place for this, and he believed it would be welcomed in Wiltshire.</p>	<p><b>May 2022</b></p> <p><b>When available</b></p>

Item	Narrative	Deadline
	<p>The programme was not a green washing platform. Farmers were at the centre of its purpose. Changes and disruptions happened in non-linear ways. If we encourage 10% of farmers to take this up, then the rest would come on board quickly. And NFU had that role to help do that.</p> <p>There was a high level of interest from the meeting about the programme.</p> <p><b>Action: A further meeting to be held with PC and RP to develop a proposal on how we can roll the programme out in Swindon &amp; Wiltshire and return to this group with the next step. To include CB, EH, JM-H and RB.</b></p>	<p><b>June 2022</b></p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Entrepreneurship, enterprise and the rural economy</b>	
	<p>This item taken out of order.</p> <p>PB advised that 98% of the businesses within Swindon &amp; Wiltshire were SMEs or micros businesses and felt that there was a specific need to build up a greater sense of understanding from entrepreneurs via direct teaching or mentoring.</p> <p>NS introduced himself to the meeting and explained his background. There was a lack of formal business school approach to education in entrepreneurship. Younger talent left the local area to go to university and returned later in their lives. But jobs were changing within the rural economy as were the skill sets required. We needed to lead the change in the rural sector and support entrepreneurship in both rural and urban environments.</p> <p>EH commented that there were labour shortages on farms. To combat this, technology should be brought into agriculture together with the people needed to develop that technology, as there was also a skills shortage around technology in farming. There was lots of development in automation to be done, but the cost could be off-putting. There was diversification in the rural economy with a lot of people working in agriculture having second jobs.</p> <p>CB added that people were gaining skills which were a legal requirement, but for diversification and business management skills people struggled to find the time and space within their day jobs. So, different models of training were needed to accommodate learners with training providers matching their training to customers' needs. Peer networking and mentoring could be one solution with networks sharing the practical experience; demonstrating financials as the business model changes; the types of financial planning for the business including looking 3-4 years ahead; the means to sell the new diversified side of the business; strategic planning and leadership to gain knowledge and exploration of ideas at a higher level on future development, not just at today's operational level.</p>	

Item	Narrative	Deadline
	<p>Other businesses operated in the rural economy, not just agriculture. Entrepreneurial activity needed to see growth. We did not want to see a decline in the rural economy. There would be job opportunities in the future, some which we had yet to see.</p> <p><b>Action: PB and NS to return to the group in July with a proposal having tested with CB.</b></p>	<p><b>June 2022</b></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>The results of the Rural Productivity All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on the rural economy</b>	
	<p>In TM's absence, PB gave a brief outline of the report on Rural Productivity from the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) which was issued at the end of March.</p> <p>PB had given evidence to the APPG. The report acknowledged that Government metrics used on project business cases were still biased towards urban areas. The PhD study being carried out by Parsa Mohammadpour had identified £18bn of the economy coming from the natural capital of the area and, at the moment, this was not taken into account.</p> <p>The report listed 27 recommendations, including planning regulations, taxation, and farming skills and processes. Connectivity was still important, be that in infrastructure or digital. A Future Farming Resilience Fund had been established for people to access advice and Innovate UK's competitions were now scheduled so that people knew when to expect them. Rural productivity was now being considered at the highest Government levels across all Departments, not simply being left within Defra. Now that the report had been published, we await the actions to follow.</p> <p>RB advised the meeting that evidence had been requested via Planning colleagues on planning applications in rural locations to work on getting that message through.</p> <p><b>Action: TM to present to the meeting in July.</b></p>	<p><b>July 2022</b></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Delivery Plan update</b>	
	The Item was not discussed.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	None	
	Attendees were thanked for their contributions to the debate.	



**Swindon & Wiltshire**  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

**Rural Economy Sector Group  
(RESG) Meeting  
11 May 2022**

Item	Narrative	Deadline
	<b>Next meeting:</b> Wednesday, 20 July - 10am to 11.30am <b>Future dates</b> Wednesday, 2 November - 10am to 11.30am	
	<b>Meeting closed at 11.25am</b>	

*Paddy Bradley*

20 July 2022