

Severn Basin Workshop

Worcester Cricket Ground, 8th March 2016

Background

The WaterLIFE project, EC LIFE+ funded, is working towards healthy rivers for people and nature by bringing together communities, business and government. The project focuses on accelerating delivery of the Water Framework Directive in five catchments across England and Wales initially.

This workshop brought together catchment partnerships in the Severn Basin to share current work, ideas and best practice. It provided an opportunity to share lessons learnt in the three civil society catchments¹ to date, and identify what tools would be useful for groups working across the whole Severn River Basin.

It is one of a series of WaterLIFE workshops. Visit www.waterlife.org.uk to read previous workshop reports.

The workshop

The day-long workshop was held at Worcestershire Cricket Ground, which overlooks the River Severn. The objectives were:

- To bring catchment partnerships together to celebrate current work across the basin and provide a platform to share ideas and best practice.
- To update on WaterLIFE activities to date and explore how it can support the partnerships
- To facilitate discussions about the future for catchment partnerships in the Severn basin.

After a welcome from Tony Bostock, Chief Executive, Severn Rivers Trust, participants had the opportunity to hear about WaterLIFE and its progress to date, followed by an update on key projects and successes from each of the ten catchment partnerships working in the Severn River Basin.

¹ Soar catchment, Humber River Basin; Tamar catchment, South-West River Basin; Camlad sub-catchment, Severn River Basin

The last session focused on future work. Michelle Walker, The Rivers Trust, introduced possible options where WaterLIFE and CaBA could offer support, including the development of a shared information platform that could be used to strengthen partnership working and provide a means to demonstrate to external audiences (including potential funders) the importance of the Severn and the ecosystem services it provides. The platform could also map all current projects, keeping partnerships better informed of the work that each of them is undertaking.

Pete Lambert, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, also updated on the Magnificent Severn campaign, which aims to highlight the Severn, including planned events for the summer. Participants were then asked to break into groups to explore these ideas in more detail.

Participants

85 participants attended the workshop from ten catchment partnerships. It was the first time all catchment partners in the Severn have had the opportunity to come together and share best practice and current projects as a group.

Outcomes

Summary of round tables

The afternoon discussion focused on four questions.

1. How do we better engage land managers/utilities/communities to realise what is required to deliver WFD?

- The need for strong data and evidence as this will help determine messages, identify problems and plan solutions.
- Involve communities from the outset – through citizen science, events and awareness raising activities. Encourage people to ‘love their river’.
- Partnership working – this can increase the benefits. Create complimentary messaging, identify key stakeholders and groups, and identify barriers and opportunities.
- Share lessons, successes and case studies – essential to share knowledge so that others can replicate success and increase the impact.

2. With WFD 2nd Cycle focussing on delivery, should we focus efforts on geographic regions or issues to create exemplars that can be rolled out in Cycle 3?

- Strategic approach will determine approaches – need to map priorities and targets.
- Outcomes must deliver benefits to the local community and businesses.
- Create case studies to showcase what works.

- Case studies and exemplars must be endorsed and supported by partners so they can influence policy.

3. What is the future of catchment partnerships?

- Importance of community involvement and action – empower and mobilise, public awareness raising through the media and external communications.
- Private sector involvement – can increase funding. Must communicate economic benefits from environment.
- Joint funding bids – possibility of leveraging greater funding by working together/with other organisations.

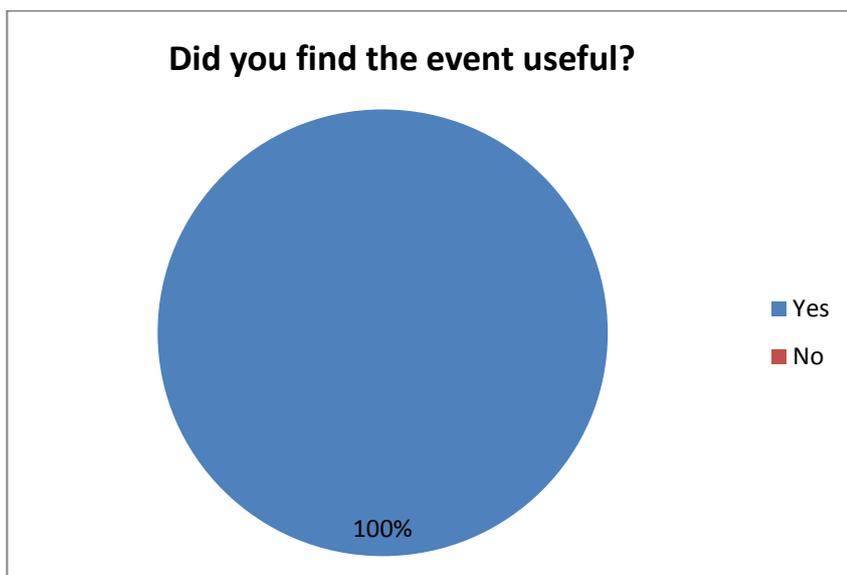
4. Would an information platform be useful to catchment partnerships?

- Help to reduce duplication.
- Makes information easily accessible to a wide group of stakeholders.
- Needs to be easily accessible by a wide group of stakeholders.

“I will work closer within our CaBA and make sure I share data more freely.”

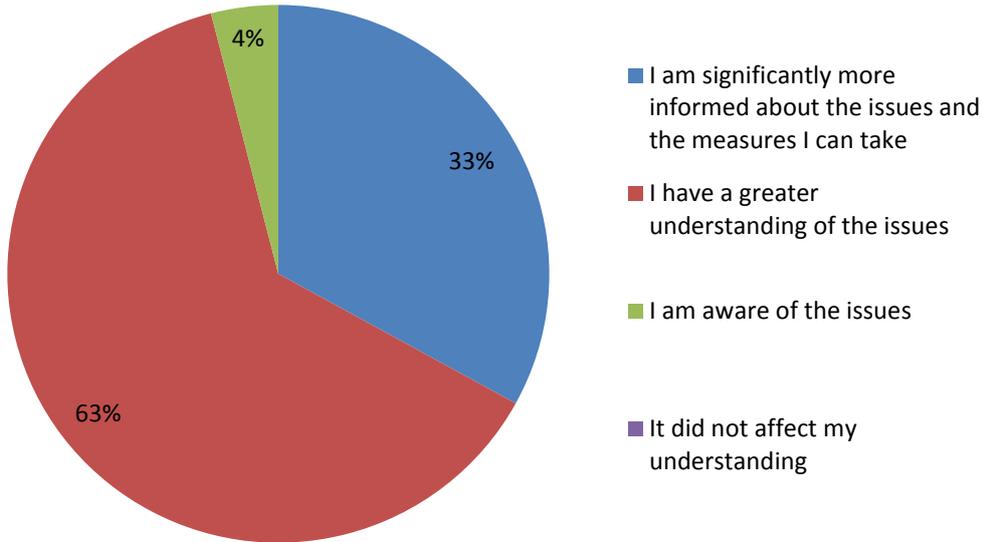
Evaluation

55% of participants completed the evaluation survey which showed overwhelmingly that the event had been very useful and the majority of participants left with new knowledge or ideas.

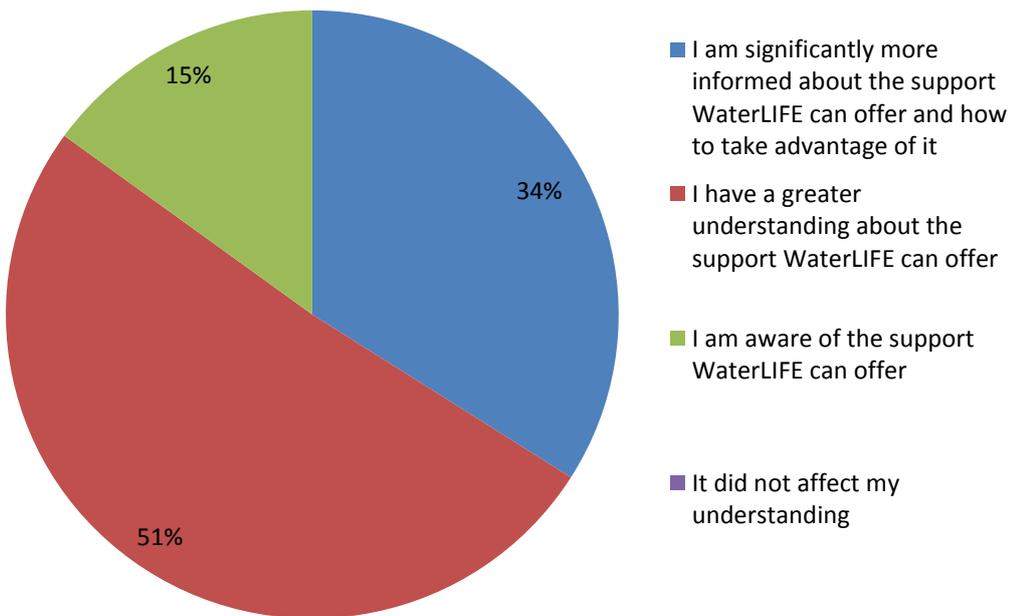


“It is good to see all so committed and supportive to our work. Great work is being done and it is good to share this.”

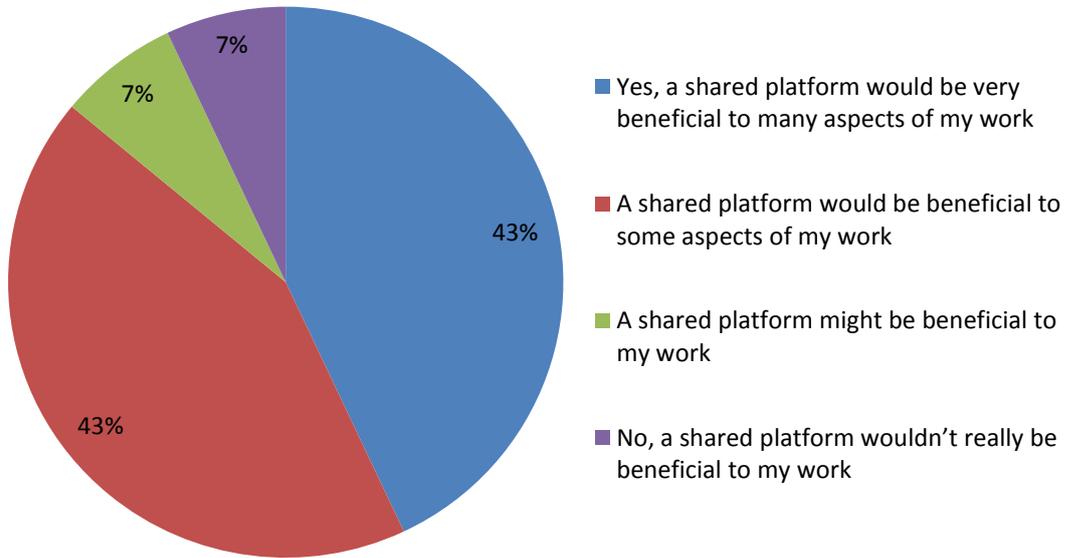
How much more informed are you about progress being made across the Severn Basin?



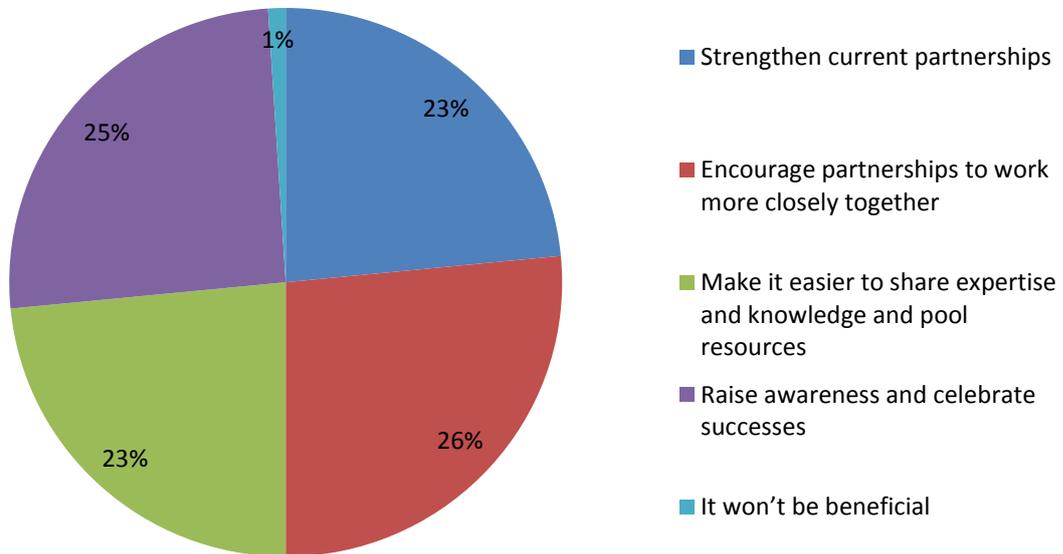
How much more informed are you about the support WaterLIFE can offer partnerships?



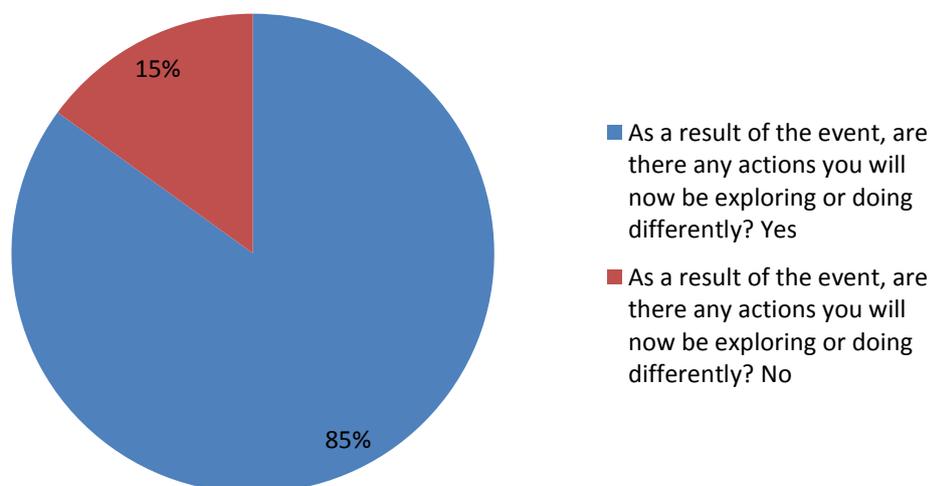
Would a shared information platform be beneficial to your work?



How would the development of the Magnificent Severn be beneficial to catchment partnerships?



Will you be doing anything differently post-workshop?



“Borrowing best practice ideas from other agencies. Totally invaluable.”

Resources

All presentations are available online at www.severnrivertrust.com .

Next steps

- Following support for the development of a shared information platform for the Severn, identify a working group to take this forward.
- Identify additional specific tools/actions WaterLIFE can support/deliver that will be of benefit for Severn River Basin catchment partnerships based on the feedback received.
- Identify and secure funding to continue the Catchment Based Approach across the Severn Basin and expand the process in Wales.

Contact

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Gallery

Zoe Hancock, Wessex Water, giving Bristol Avon Partnership update



Participants in break out groups discussing the future



View of the River Severn near Worcester cricket grounds

