

Making space for water in the Trent

Newark-on-Trent, 15th June 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 organisations from across the Trent catchment all working to improve the water environment. It provided an opportunity to share and discuss progress on the Trent, what a successful catchment partnership looks and what support WaterLIFE could offer.

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 Newark Showground, located in the Trent catchment.

After a welcome from Mark Owen, Trent Rivers Trust, participants were given an update on WaterLIFE's progress followed by reflections on what makes a successful catchment partnership. This was followed by updates from projects across each of the seven main sub-catchments in the Trent, including a SuDS project in Leicester schools, efforts to let the River Dove flow naturally, and exciting citizen science work in the Peak District. The presentations gave a flavour of the diversity of projects and an insight into different engagement techniques.

There was significant interest from participants to learn about other delivery projects and to encourage the exchange of information.

The last session focused on strengthening catchment partnerships. Michelle Walker, The Rivers Trust, introduced options where WaterLIFE and CaBA could offer support, including the development of a shared information platform to strengthen partnership working and provide a means to demonstrate to external audiences (including potential funders) the importance of the Trent. The platform would also map current projects,

keeping partnerships better informed about the work happening across the wider catchment.

Participants

Around 70 participants attended the workshop from a range of catchment partnerships and organisations, including the Environment Agency, Trent Rivers Trust, The Rivers Trust, Derby City Council, Nottingham City Council, Canal & Rivers Trust, Severn Trent Water, Nottingham Trent University, and the RSPB. It offered an opportunity for a wide range of organisations to share best practice, ideas and successes and look to the future.

Discussion topics

Participants were then asked to explore two questions:

1. What benefits has your catchment partnership given you or your organisation?
2. How can WaterLIFE help your catchment partnership achieve success? (For example – development of an information platform, production of guidance and case studies)

Summary of discussions

What benefits has your catchment partnerships given you or your organisations?

Opportunities to engage: Provides a framework which brings partners together to develop and deliver plans as well as relationships through meetings and workshops. It also enables new organisations to continual input and be included.

Data and evidence: Raises awareness about where data can be accessed and how it can be used.

Public engagement: Provides an opportunity for organisations to increase public consultation and engagement in the water environment – leading to more sustainable change.

Funding: Increased funding opportunities through partnership working as well as enabling access to alternative funding sources.

Ability to share knowledge and ideas: Offers a platform to share knowledge and ideas, as well as access to technical expertise, data and evidence.

Influence: It has increased visibility and the profile of water as well as organisations within catchment partnerships.

Joined up working: A range of people, organisations and expertise coming together to deliver a shared vision. This increases collaboration, communication and coordination resulting in increased success.

How can WaterLIFE help your catchment partnership to be successful?

Funding: Help identify funding opportunities, provide guidance and training.

Information platform and evidence: Legacy platform to enable knowledge sharing and best practice, encourage innovation and build capacity amongst catchment partnerships. Make GIS data available for practical implementation.

Guidance and tools: Creation of various guidance and tools that catchments can be used to help apply for funding, citizen science, monitor projects etc.

Case studies and good practice: Showcasing exemplar catchments in each river basin district so that others can replicate.

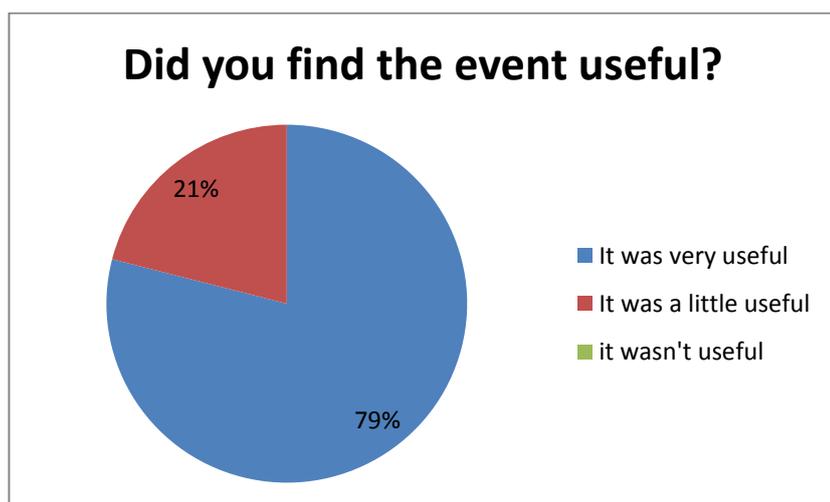
Communications and benefits: Create opportunities to celebrate success through workshops and other means as well as collation of evidence and examples from across Europe that can be shared across the UK.

Outcomes

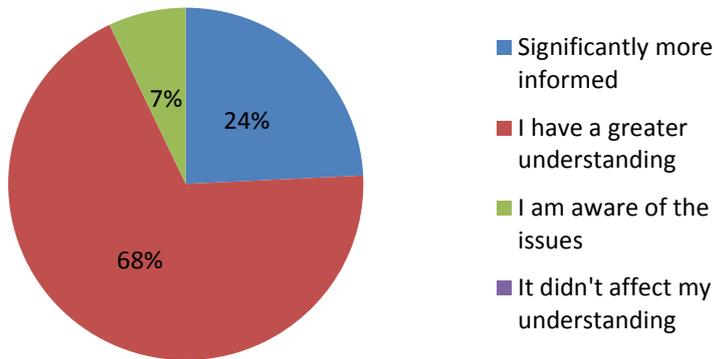
Evaluation

Just over half 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. Nearly three-quarters of respondents also thought that an information platform would be useful to their work.

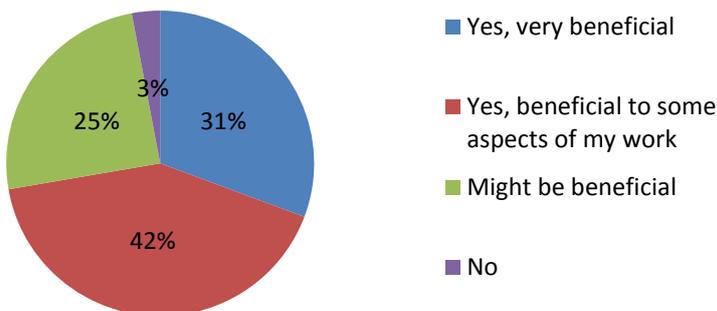
“It gave me ideas for projects and how I can put them into action in my own catchment.”



How much more informed are you about progress on the Trent?



Would a shared information platform be beneficial?



“Taking ideas from others and implementing them in our catchment.”

Resources

All presentations are available online: www.trentrivertrust.org/site/WaterLIFE

Next steps

- Organise a smaller follow-up meeting to develop an information platform.
- Soar CP to explore the possibility of holding a workshop with developers

Contact

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Gallery

David Newborough, Environment Agency, reflecting on what makes a successful catchment partnership.



Participants exploring how catchment partnerships (and the catchment based approach) has helped their organisation.

