

RUSCOMBE BROOK GROUP

MEMORANDUM OF CO-OPERATION



The parties listed in section 6 have agreed to an informal memorandum of co-operation that will collectively be referred to as the Ruscombe Brook Group. For further information contact Philip Booth, Secretary of the Ruscombe Brook Action Group, Lark Rise, Bread Street, Ruscombe, Stroud, Glos. GL6 6EL Telephone: 01453 755451

1. VISION STATEMENT

The Ruscombe Brook Group aims to improve the quality of water in the brook, to increase biodiversity in and around the brook corridor, and to promote the amenity value of the brook environment through community involvement. The Group intends to achieve these through stakeholders working co-operatively together, sharing expertise and communication in the development of sustainable solutions for Ruscombe Brook.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS MEMORANDUM OF CO-OPERATION

2.1 To provide an agreed understanding of the aims and objectives of the Ruscombe Brook Group.

2.2 To ensure a common understanding of the roles and commitments of the various organisations involved in this memorandum of co-operation.

2.3 To provide a framework for the implementation of agreed works following on from the scoping plan.

3. REASON FOR THE MEMORANDUM OF CO-OPERATION

Ruscombe Brook Action Group became concerned about the poor water quality in the local stream, and were aware that raw sewage had been leaking into the Brook from the sewer system over a prolonged period of time. However, it was soon apparent that poor water quality was due not to this single problem alone, but to a number of factors. This complex interplay of factors was not the responsibility of any single organisation or authority, so it was clear that sustainable solutions would require a co-operative joint approach.

Co-operation will:-

- give access to wider expertise and resources than single organisations acting alone
- enable shared learning which can act as a model for similar problems in other watercourses
- promote an integrated, more efficient and cost-effective approach to activities.
- promote a positive image to the wider community

4. KEY AIMS OF RUSCOMBE BROOK GROUP

4.1 Water Quality– to bring about significant improvements in the water quality of Ruscombe Brook through reducing pollution and consider establishing a Ruscombe Brook Standard for measuring water quality within watercourses

4.2 Flood Prevention– to ensure that Ruscombe Brook acts as an effective means of drainage for local flood prevention

4.3 Community Awareness– to inform public understanding of the impacts of poor practice in the use of the sewer network, and promote more responsible usage

4.4 Wildlife Improvements– to develop in-stream and other habitat enhancements to improve biodiversity

4.5 Quality of Life– to promote public access to and enjoyment of Ruscombe Brook through greater community understanding, involvement and consultation on issues relating to the brook

4.6 Sustainable Development– to promote the use of sustainable drainage systems, rainwater harvesting and possible sustainable energy generation. To provide information to the community about their impact on the local environment.

4.7 Health Improvements –to support local research projects involved in investigating potential health impacts of sewage in watercourses.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF RUSCOMBE BROOK GROUP

5.1 All members to use their expertise and knowledge to support this memorandum of co-operation.

5.2 All members to support the scoping exercise to be carried out by Water 21 (see appendix).

5.3 A meeting of stakeholders will be called to look at the first draft of the scoping exercise to consider the proposed engineering works, to agree implementation and management arrangements.

5.4 All members to support the agreed engineering works.

6. CURRENT SIGNATURES

- Ruscombe Brook Action Group

Groups that will be invited (many have already expressed an interest):

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • Environment Agency | • Gloucestershire County Council Highways |
| • Severn Trent Water | • Cainscross Parish Council |
| • British Waterways | • Whiteshill and Ruscombe Parish Council |
| • Community Land Trust | • Randwick Parish Council |
| • Stroud Valleys Project | • Stroud Town Council |
| • Water 21 | • Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust |
| • Vision 21 | • Stroud District Council |

7. PLEASE RETURN THIS SLIP



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We agree to the Ruscombe Brook Group's Memorandum of Cooperation.

Signed:

On behalf of:

Address:

Please return this slip to: Philip Booth, Secretary of the Ruscombe Brook Action Group, Lark Rise, Bread Street, Ruscombe, Stroud, Glos. GL6 6EL

APPENDIX: SCOPING EXERCISE

The Ruscombe Brook Action Group set up the framework (below) for work needed to assess what might be possible for the Ruscombe Brook. This framework has since been accepted by Water 21. It will be the basis of the work they will soon start to carry out.

Requirements of Ruscombe Brook Action Group for commissioning a plan to achieve improvements to Ruscombe Brook

AIM

Ruscombe Brook Action Group is seeking to commission a plan of practical proposals to achieve three aims:

- To improve the water quality in the brook by significantly reducing pollution
- To improve and increase biodiversity in and around the brook corridor
- To seek community involvement and participation in improving the quality of green spaces around the brook in order to improve the amenity value of the Ruscombe Brook area.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This plan will be a clear set of practical proposals to be used for the following purposes:

- As an essential tool for seeking financial support from appropriate funding bodies to pay for the work to be done
- As a set of practical proposals to take to stakeholders and the local community to gain local support, consultation and to make amendments.
- As a set of plans to show to prospective contractors to give RBAG a basis for negotiation and commissioning.
- It will be used to publicise the details of proposed work, to enable contractors to place bids as part of the commissioning process and support RBAG in managing the costs.

HOW THE PLAN IS TO BE CONDUCTED

The plan will be an end to end consideration of the entire length of the brook from the springs in Ruscombe down to the Lake at the Lawns in Gainscross. It will take any existing information / surveys / data and adapt what has been done already to produce a new plan which is appropriate to the current state of the brook. This should also include information and suggestions received by RBAG from the Bournestream Partnership and any other similar organisations such as Bristol City Living Water scheme. It will take into account any progress / agreements / negotiations that have been made by RBAG with stakeholders such as the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water, British Waterways, Parish Councils, Stroud Valleys Project etc.

GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE

Ruscombe Brook Action Group must be able to assess the success or otherwise of any work carried out on the Brook as a result of implementing this plan of action. It must be able to judge whether the aims stated at the beginning of this document have been achieved. In order to do this, the following two things are required:

1. Baselines – assessments of biodiversity, water quality and amenity prior to work starting
2. Measurable Outcomes – re-assessments of biodiversity, water quality and amenity value after works to the brook have been completed

The commissioning of work on Ruscombe Brook will be governed by the following principles:

- Prioritise practical projects that produce the greatest benefits for the least cost
- All measures to be cost-effective and value for money
- Reasonable timescales
- Proportionate costs in relation to funding

RBAG will make a written evaluation of achievements and costs on completion of work.

CONTENT OF THE PLAN

The following issues are to be considered within the plan (not exhaustive)

Problems including consented overflows, outflows, silt build-up, flooding at Puckshole and elsewhere, misconnections and rainwater and surface water overloading the sewer in times of heavy rain.

Solutions including reedbeds / ponds or other installations to improve water quality, the role of Highways Department, the role of landowners, the Yellow Fish Scheme, developments at Hamwell Leaze as an amenity area and proposed developments by British Waterways at the Lake at the Lawns.

Baselines could included (possibly sub-contract these assessments to specialists in these areas): Biodiversity baseline, Water Quality baseline and Amenity baseline

Helen Patrick on behalf of the Ruscombe Brook Action Group
26. September 2006