Repair to weir – meeting with EA

Please see summary of our meeting with the EA to discuss the repair to the weir and a possible fish pass:

Hi Lisa, Gary and Tony,
Thank you for meeting us to talk through your and our ideas for the Weir. Apologies for the delay in replying, but my daughter and now myself have gone down with Covid so I am juggling work and childcare.

Meeting summary:

1. Charlbury TC are looking at a small HEP - Turbulent Hydropower (https://www.turbulent.be/) to replace the sluice gate of the mill channel. Syphon design currently undergoing assessment for fish impact. TC are at feasibility study stage using rural energy grant.
2. Head at weir would need to be retained at the weir for the mill channel for the HEP and amenity uses (canoe club) and to not further divorce the channel from the floodplain upstream - could be some wetland options if we can keep the water level where it is?
3. EA suggestion of removing weir and replacing with a series of rock riffles to the same height as the current weir. Top rock riffle potentially needs to be a more formal structure (gabion rock wall?) to retain head in mill channel? The rock riffles would be stepped along the length of the main Evenlode channel.
4. At the downstream confluence of the mill channel and Evenlode - narrowing would be required to increase flow velocity to attract fish away from the HEP/mill channel and to use the main Evenlode channel and new rock riffles to move upstream and bypass the mill channel.
5. There is a pipe draining the field upstream which passes under the weir which needs to be considered in the design.
6. Charlbury TC have initial quotes on weir replacement of £25K.
7. Ann had landownership maps at the meeting – an alternative (but probably less preferable) solution of a new bypass channel at the weir would require working with the landowner upstream and require the creation of a long length of new channel (200m approx.). TC own the land between the two channels and on the left of the mill channel, Cornbury Estate own the land on the right bank.
8. Other considerations – wild swimming location for town – stepped access to channel currently by the weir – rock riffle design may change this.
9. Look for potential to include wetland habitat creation on the floodplain where the channel is least incised at the downstream end – potentially linking with Cornbury Estate. There are very high banks and disconnected channel at the upstream end nearest the weir – be difficult to reconnect or undertake a stage zero floodplain reconnection project.

Next Steps/actions:

1. **TC** continuing feasibility study on HEP solution.

2. **Stu Manwaring** to send example designs of rock riffles/rock wall to TC so that they can obtain quotes for weir replacement.
3. **Ann and Jo** to look for partner funding sources for habitat creation elements of project e.g. channel narrowing element at confluence and bank/floodplain works on main Evenlode channel.
4. **Daryl** to pass on an EA e-mail contact for the permitting team for HEP solution and weir replacement solution respectively.

I hope this summarises everything, but please add anything I have missed that was discussed.

Kind regards
Jo