Tarland Burn restoration

Community engagement (feasibility stage) – summary of responses

Produced and published by the Project Team (Tarland Development Group, The MacRobert Trust, Dee Catchment Partnership, RSPB Scotland)

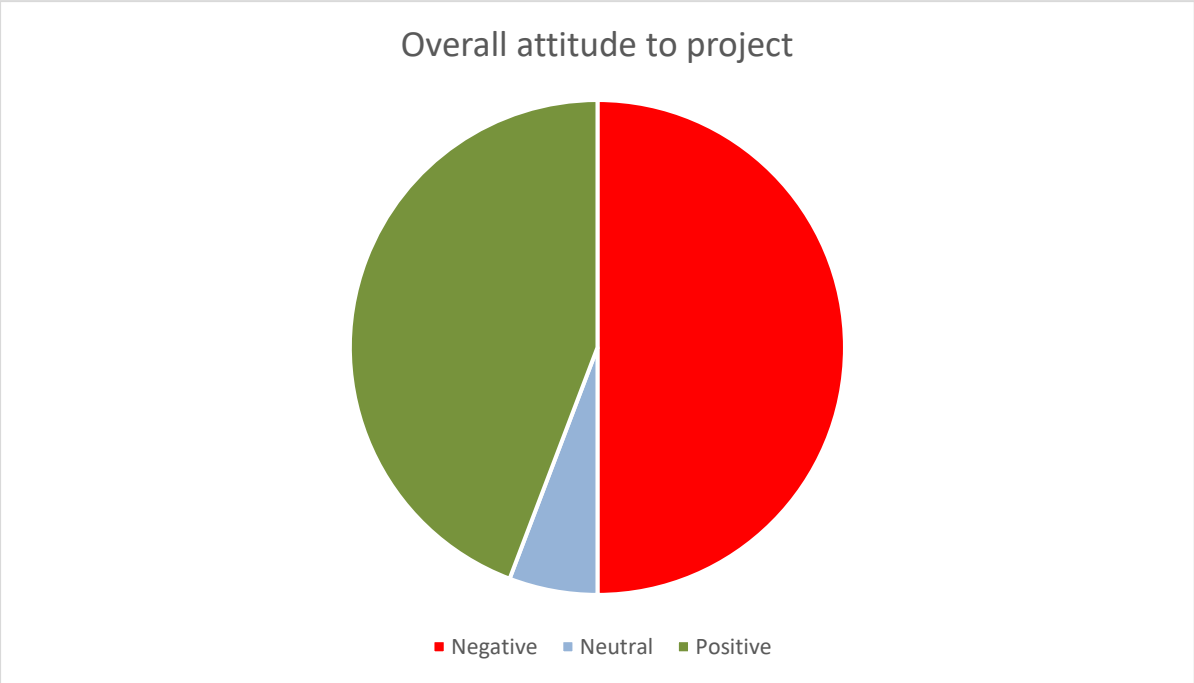
June 2023

Responses received

A total of 52 responses were analysed. This removed duplicated responses and includes both emailed responses and responses which were noted on paper at the drop-in meeting. Each response was analysed to establish whether the writer was supportive or not of the project and to pick out the individual issues on which they had commented.

Overall attitude to the work

Responses were categorised as either positive, neutral or negative. A total of 26 negative responses were received, three neutral and 23 positive responses. This is shown in the graph below:

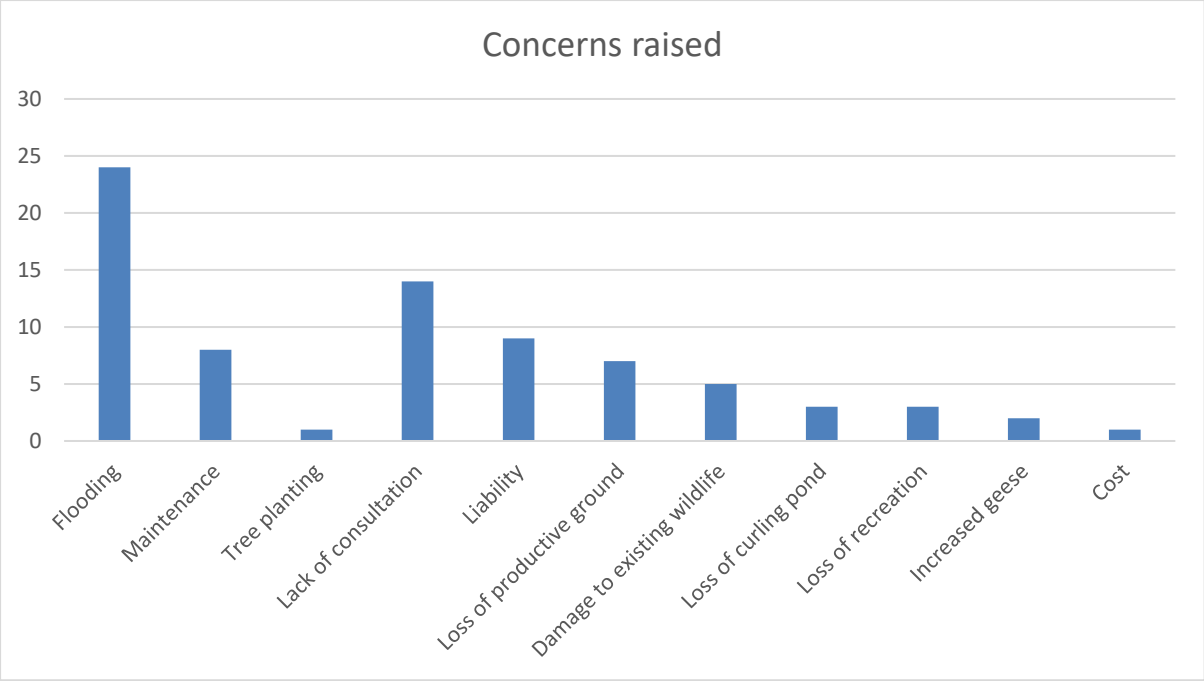


Concerns raised

A number of concerns with the project were mentioned by respondents. In most cases these were reasons why people did not support the project, but in some cases they were also concerns for those who broadly supported the project as well. The most common of these related to potential flooding implications, followed by a lack of consultation and concerns over long term maintenance and liability.

Several respondents raised concerns about the loss of productive ground in relation to future food security issues.

The issues raised are shown below, along with an indication of the number of respondents who raised them:



Additional actions requested

Some respondents suggested additional things they would like to see incorporated in the project going forward. The most frequent of these was more consultation (requested by seven respondents), with additional recreational opportunities (e.g. the incorporation of more paths) requested by four respondents, two suggestions for more meanders and more flood storage suggested by a single individual.

General issues raised

The word cloud overleaf shows the most frequently used words in people's responses. It should be noted that as the consultation wasn't originally set up to produce this type of graphical output, some irrelevant words have been discounted (e.g. and / or / the / I etc). It should also be noted that a word cloud doesn't distinguish people's attitudes to each word (for example, people may have mentioned flooding as a positive or a negative aspect of the project). However, it shows the issues which people are considering in response to the proposal and therefore where future consultation may need to provide additional information.

In general, negative responses were longer and contained multiple concerns, whilst positive responses were shorter.



village
restoration
flooding
water
flood
risk
development
community
farmers
area
group
local
trust
people
proposed
concerns
farmland
know
wildlife
already
land
existing
flow
drop
biodiversity
potential
howe
macrobert
wetland
wetlands
coull
along
maintenance
upstream
responsible
presented
aware
event
drains
downstream
works
work
houses
helpful
slowing
considered
increase
meeting
drainage
regarding
channel
bridge
residents
create
nature
scale
new
time
full
banks
field
cost
need
think
damage
good
years
storm
council
quality
stretch

Consideration of feedback in next stage of project

As the project progresses to the design phase, the key opinions and concerns raised through the community event will be taken into account.

Specifically, the potential for flood risk upstream within the village is a major concern of some of those who provided feedback. To obtain approval from the regulating authorities, including planning permission, there will be a requirement to show that the restoration proposals do not increase flood risk to homes, roads or other infrastructure within the site, as well as upstream and downstream. Any changes to flood risk resulting from the scheme will be assessed using a Flood Risk Assessment. This involves using computer modelling to map the location and extent of any flooding. This is assessed based on different amounts of rainfall, so will show where any flooding would occur in both common rainfall events (e.g., of which there is a 50% chance of a flood event of at least that size, in any given year) and extreme events (e.g., where there is a 0.5% chance of a flood event of at least this size, in any given year). This can then be compared with the current situation to see if there are any changes.

Another important factor raised in the consultation is the impact of the scheme on land use, particularly agriculture. In this next phase of the project, as the designs are developed, this will be quantified and discussed with those who manage land within the site boundary. Concerns have also been noted regarding the potential impact on the functioning of the existing land drainage system as a result of the works. Open field drainage ditches will be considered explicitly as the designs are developed, ensuring that they remain effective and, where possible, reducing the amount of water that currently backs up through the drains during high flow events. This could also benefit the associated sub-surface drainage.

From the feedback provided through the engagement event, the Project Group understands the desire for more regular communication with land managers and the local community. With this in mind, active engagement with the local community is planned in the period between the design phase and any formal planning consultation. This will include regular updates on developments and allow everyone a further opportunity to feedback on the proposals. Such communication will be done in a non-technical way with clear language and images to try to ensure there is no confusion over the proposed measures.