



UK Man and the  
Biosphere  
Programme  
Urban Forum

## Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014 at National Wildflower Centre, Liverpool

### 1. Present

Peter Frost	(PF)	Natural Resources Wales
David Goode	(DG)	UCL
Nick Grayson	(NG)	Biophilic Cities Network
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester
John Millar	(JM)	Independent
Alison Millward	(AM)	Independent Consultant (Chair)
Philip James	(PJ)	Salford University
Terry Robinson	(TR)	Independent Consultant
Alan Scott	(AS)	Independent Consultant
Richard Scott	(RS)	Landlife

Observer: Cecile Mercat

### 2. Apologies

Ambra Burls, John Box, Peter Cush, Samantha Davenport, Ian Douglas, David Haley, John Handley, Jane Houghton, Kerry Morrison, Judy Ling Wong, Jane Houghton, Peter Shirley.

### 3. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 were approved.

### 4. Matters Arising

#### A1 Communications Strategy

Thanks were expressed to AB for completing the work on the new logo (which PS subsequently emailed to all members for utilisation on all future correspondence). No progress to report on developing a Communications Strategy. Deferred until next meeting. **A1 (SD & AM)**

TR offered to draft six key messages that the Forum might be able to promote during 2014-15 and for developing links with the PURPLE Network and other international groups, in particular. **A2 (TR)**

#### A3 Removal of members from list

No progress to report. **A3 (AM)**

#### A7 Governance options

JM gave a very clear and helpful update on the pros and cons of Community Interest Companies, for which it is expected that the CIC will make a regular surplus/profit once the new venture is established. Members could be remunerated for work done through a CIC. This option needed to be compared with that of a new designation – the Community Interest Organisation. KM to be asked to report on the pros and cons of a CIO against criteria regarding maintaining our style as a light touch, volunteer led organisation, with a maximum turnover under £10,000 pa, wishing to limit the liability of members for views expressed and advice offered to third parties. **A4 (KM)**

JM and KM to liaise and sketch out a draft business plan to identify the fund raising needs/opportunities required to satisfy the designation criteria for each type of designation. **A5 (JM & KM)**

#### A9 Bardsey Island

AB to confirm letter of rejection has been sent. **A6 (AB)**

#### A10 Social Media

AB was thanked for having set up a LinkedIn account for the Forum.

### 5. Financial Report

Report from PS was tabled and received with thanks. Current balances stand at £6,500.

### 6. New members

JM's proposal for Elizabeth Rollinson, currently Chief Executive of the Linnaean Society was well received but members felt that ER should be asked by JM to provide a few extra paragraphs on what she hoped to contribute to the work of the Forum, and submit to the next meeting. **A7 (JM)**

### 7. Work Programme Reports

#### Art and Nature events

Liverpool event June 2014 – relatively few participants but proved to be very provocative. One of the artists had turned her home into an installation in what remained of a housing area largely demolished and blighted by the unsuccessful Housing Renewal Pathfinder initiative.

Black Country event is now scheduled for 25-26 October 2014 and it is anticipated that the Northern Ireland event will take place in spring or early summer 2015.

#### Urban Biosphere Reserves

Designation of Brighton, Hove, Lewes and South Downs BR was expected in mid June (and confirmed after the meeting). TR kindly offered to attend the launch event and UKMAB Committee meeting on 22-23 June as the Forum's representative.

A number of members of the Forum had received an email from John Patmore (an ecologist local to Brighton), arguing that BR status should not be awarded to Brighton as the Council there had shown no commitment to biodiversity and a lack of regard for local specialist knowledge. Following a lively discussion of the issues and also the limitations on Forum members' willingness to advise on such matters, the Chair was

asked to respond emphasising that the BR organisation would be required to engage with stakeholders in its decision making.

Members felt that rather than seek to propose new urban centred candidate BRs to the UK MAB Committee, a new designation might be required for biodiversity rich urban nature parks, which would not dilute the values associated with BRs. London was seeking such a designation. This might require expanding the membership of the Urban Group within UNESCO MAB to develop the concept further.

CPD for Planners, Promoting Community Engagement, Pro-environmental Behaviours  
No progress to report.

Engaging People in Urban Nature

JM (and JLW) will be contributing to various BioBlitz events throughout 2014.  
AM to circulate Defra's Engaging People in Biodiversity research paper (see attached). **A8 (AM)**

## **8. Awards for Excellence**

AS tabled an initial eligibility criteria assessment of proposed Award candidates. Five met the criteria and are to be visited as follows:

Camley Street Natural Park – AM & JM

National Wildflower Centre – JH (NL to ask) and KM

Mersey Forest Plan – NL & ANOther tbd

Brighton, Hove, Lewes and South Downs BR – MF and AS

Natural Capital Toolkit – JB

Members thanked AS and colleagues for progressing matters and emphasised their particular interest in identifying the innovative characteristics of these initiatives. AS agreed to circulate a common assessment template for site visits. **A9 (AS/MF/SD)**

The meeting also unanimously agreed to propose JLW for an Award – AM to research. **A10 (AM)**

Watching briefs to be kept on DN (by RS) and Northwich Woodlands (JH).

## **9. Annual Work Programme update**

ID and PJ's textbook on Urban Ecology is at proof reading stage. PJ to send new Forum logo to publisher.

Members were interested to explore whether the Linnaean Society might host a debate on the six key messages TR was to develop for promoting to politicians in advance of the 2015 general election.

SER 2015 conference – RS was asked to identify specific types of help needed from the Forum and circulate.

Water – NL to liaise with GL over new work programme ideas.

New economic models needed for urban systems – NG to ponder.

DG's 'Nature in Towns and Cities' will be both a natural history and a biography of the urban nature movement.

**10. AOB**

UK MAB Committee Plan

Any comments to AM please asap.

Thanks were expressed to RS for the NWC's hospitality for the meeting.

**11. DONM**

Monday 27 October 2014, 12-4pm, Edgbaston, Birmingham

A Tuesday in February 2015 – Camley Street, Kings Cross, London (**A10 MF to confirm**)

*NB: David Haley will be out of action for the next 6-9 months having treatment for throat cancer. Prognosis is looking good and he is hoping to start writing a book!*