



UK Man and the
Biosphere
Programme
Urban Forum

**Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 13th February 2015 at
Camley Street Natural Park, London N1C 4PW**

1. Present

John Box	(JB)	Atkins
Ambra Burls	(AB)	Bangor University (Vice Chair) (Skype)
Samantha Davenport	(SD)	Natural England
Ian Douglas	(ID)	University of Manchester
Mathew Frith	(MF)	London Wildlife Trust
Peter Frost	(PF)	Natural Resources Wales (Skype)
David Goode	(DG)	Independent
Jane Houghton	(JH)	Natural England
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (in part)
John Millar	(JM)	Independent
Alison Millward	(AM)	Independent Consultant (Chair)
Elizabeth Rollinson	(ER)	Linnaean Society
Alan Scott	(AS)	Independent
Peter Shirley	(PS)	Independent

2. Apologies

Peter Cush, David Haley, Nick Grayson, Philip James, Judy Ling Wong, Kerry Morrison, Joe Ravetz, Terry Robinson.

3. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record with some minor amendments.

4. Matters arising

- David Nicholson Lord's partners details still required – MF to follow up
- 6 Messages – AM to circulate for members to use in run up to general election
- Removal of members from list – AM progressing.

5. Financial report

Forum has £5,145.64 available at present.

6. Awards for Excellence

AM thanked MF, AS and SD for all their work on seeing the new mechanism through its first year of operation so successfully and bringing five assessments to the meeting for approval.

Awards were approved for:

- Camley Street Natural Park
- Mersey Forest Plan
- Birmingham Natural Capital City Toolkit

Decisions for the other sites/initiatives were deferred:

- National Wildflower Centre - further information is required
- Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve – a meeting with the project officer still required.

Action 1: AS, MF and SD

There was a long and considered discussion about the pros and cons of making awards to individuals and to past and present members of the Urban Forum in particular. Several members expressed discomfort at the Urban Forum being seen to reward its own with awards. The system for achieving fellowship status of the Urban Forum was working well and was held in high regard by recipients. Establishing an Honorary Fellowship could be considered in the future. Others suggested that there were various other existing and external mechanisms which the Urban Forum could use to nominate individuals for recognition of their contribution to urban nature conservation including the honours system and the Royal Society process (via a nomination from CIEEM).

On balance the meeting felt that the awards should be restricted to projects but asked the Awards subgroup to bring a formal recommendation to the next meeting to confirm the Forum's position on this issue, and proposals for the presentation of awards to the 2014 recipients. **Action 2: AS, MF and SD.**

Work Programme Updates

AM congratulated and thanked members for all their efforts in delivering the 2014/15 work programme so successfully. This included the roll out of the new award for excellence system, two Art and Nature events, the publication of ID and PJ's textbook on urban ecology and DG's book on Nature in Cities, the development of thinking around new economic models for biophilic cities, progressing opportunities for engaging people through the Wild Network and Bioblitz events, initiation of the digitisation of the Forum's archive and the development of six key messages for influencing others. Members had brought their influence to bear on various organisations including the UKMAB Committee, Defra's People Engagement Group and Civil Society Partnership Network, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Biodiversity and IUCN/WCPA Urban Specialist Group. The official designation of the distinctively urban Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve and the award of the Society for Ecological Restoration's 2015 conference to Manchester were warmly welcomed.

Work Programme Proposals 2015/16

Not content to rest on their laurels, members put forward an exciting range of proposals for the work programme in 2015/16. Provisional leads are identified in brackets and other volunteers would be most welcome to offer their services in support.

Influencing:

- Contributions to the SER 2015 conference (RS, DH, KM, NL)
- Collation of evidence base on the value of green belt and its value to green infrastructure to facilitate engagement in national debate about future green belt policy (ID)
- Awareness raising of the 6 messages at the general election hustings **Action 3: ALL**
- Awareness raising event for the All Party Parliamentary Group on Biodiversity on utilising environmental audit and ecosystem service valuations (JM, MF).
- Promoting the benefits of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in London and elsewhere (MF and others)
- Supporting the Nature of Cities blog project on the use of birds as an indicator of the QOL of urban populations with a focus on the northwest and Thames Gateway (DG, NG)
- Update Local Nature Reserve guidance in partnership with Natural England (JH)
- Develop and promote the ecosystem service value of cemeteries – thought piece needed to kick start process (JH)
- Develop partnership with Linnaean Society to host meetings and urban nature art installations (ER and others)
- CPD for planners (SD, AM, ER)
- Develop thinking on how to finance urban nature reserves (SD, JB, MF)
- Host a talk by Ken Thompson on ‘Where do camels come from’ re invasive species issues (PRS)
- Collate spreadsheet guidance on sources of practical site management advice (AS)
- Promote examples of application of Natural City Capital Toolkit applications to assess, design and build new developments as at Camley Street Natural Park, Birmingham etc.
- Explore use of Quality of Life and self-actualisation as antedotes to wealth creation as the prime driver of urban living (PF, DG)

Art and Nature:

- 3 more events (JLW, AB, KM and others)

Biosphere Reserves:

- Support development of Sutton Park to Cannock Chase proposal (JB, PRS)
- Strengthen links with other Biosphere Reserves – Vienna and Christianstad in Sweden (PF)
- Contribute to UK MAB Committee initiatives (Chair and others)

Engagement:

- Contribute to Bioblitz events at Brompton Cemetery and other venues (JM, JLW, ER)

Organisational management:

- Develop website – volunteer needed to develop content further
- Digitise archive material (JH)
- Complete transfer to company limited by guarantee status (AM)

- Appoint new chair (AM, NL)

Pro-environmental behaviour:

- Develop event and thought pieces (AB and others)
- Contribute to National Parks and Wellbeing conference (AB)

New Members

The following names were put forward:

- James Farrell (for work on Water Framework Directive)
- Chamu Kuppuswamy (law lecturer, Peak District ranger, MOSAIC champion) – JLW to encourage
- Peter Dogse (MAB's economics expert) – ID to encourage

MAB Strategy 2015-2020

Members were asked to send AM comments by 27 February. **Action 4: ALL**

AOB

Thanks were expressed to MF for organising the venue and taking notes.

All enjoyed the presentation of an Award for Excellence to the team at Camley Street Natural Park. **Action 5: Citation and photo to be put onto website (PRS)**

Draft Memorandum and Articles of Association for limited company status to be circulated. **Action 6: AM**

Date of Next meeting

Monday 11th May, Slate Museum, Llanberis (prior to Blue Planet Art and Nature Event in North Wales) @ <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/slate/visit/location/>
October, Bristol possibly – **Action 7: MF** to explore.