

UK Urban Ecology Forum

Minutes of the meeting held at University of Manchester Wednesday May 17th 2017

Present

Ian Douglas (ID)	University of Manchester
Paul Evans (PE)	Independent writer and broadcaster
Peter Frost (PF)	NRW
Nick Grayson (NG)	Birmingham City Council
John Handley (JH)	University of Manchester
Nigel Lawson (NL) (Assisting RS)	University of Manchester
Judy Ling-Wong (JLW)	BEM
Kerry Morrison (KM)	Independent
Terry Robinson (TR)	Independent
Richard Scott (RS) (Chair)	Eden Project
Peter Shirley (PS)	Independent
Joanne Tippett (JT)	University of Manchester

By invitation (Presenters)

Janice Astbury	Durham University
Dave Bell	Natural England
Arthur Getz	
Sarah Lindley	University of Manchester

Apologies

Mathew Frith, David Goode, Jane Houghton, John Millar, Polly Mosely, Alison Millward, Julie Proctor, Joe Ravetz, Elizabeth Rollinson, Alan Scott.

Minutes of meeting held December 14th 2016

The minutes were accepted

Updates from Chair

Meetings:

PS explained that due to circumstances at Landlife it had only been possible hold three meeting in 2015 and 2016. However, his situation is now clearer, he is now involved with the Eden Project which will hopefully also open opportunities for the Forum in the future.

Invasive species (Ken Thompson event):

PS reported that the idea of holding a seminar on this subject has been shelved due to lack of interest.

RS informed members that Elizabeth Rollinson had responded to the possibility of the Forum holding such an event at the Linnean Society and that she would be happy to put a proposal to the Society's Programme Committee which is currently finalising the 2018 programme.

In discussion it became clear that the problem of dealing with invasive species was considered to be both important and topical, that there is considerable interest in it and that it is one to which the Forum could contribute. NL suggested trying to bring this to a wide audience and reminded members that the Forum had held a very successful and well attended conference on Street Trees at UCL in 2010 which resulted in a net profit for the Forum of £1528 (Income £3080 less expenses of £1552). PS felt that the topic is of particular interest to all nature conservationists, biologists, land managers, etc. NG felt that there would be much interest within the National Infrastructure Network; JLW said that BEN was much concerned and KM also emphasised the importance of dissemination to the general public.

It was agreed in principle to proceed with towards holding an event on Invasive Species with the aim of gaining greater understanding and in producing guidelines.

Action:

- ***RS to follow up with Linnean Society.***
- ***All members to provide RS and PS with their thoughts and suggestions on the type of event, potential guest speakers, potential invitees, etc. as soon as possible.***
- ***RS and PS to seek to take this forward.***

Financial Report

PS reported:

- Income from art event in Wales August 2016: £150.
- Expenditure re meetings held January 2016 and December 2016: £507
- Balance of funds (net): £4507.

Presentations

Manchester Urban Pioneer. Presentation by Dave Bell, Natural England

Urban Pioneer is about the importance of urban greenspaces and their relationship to people. Urban Pioneer covers societal, environmental and strategic issues with people are at the centre and is concerned with measuring and preserving natural capita in communication with the general public. PF offered to feed in findings from Wales. Discussion included the issue of greenspace management.

Green infrastructure and the health and wellbeing influences on an ageing population (The GHIA research project). Presentation by Sarah Lindley, University of Manchester.

The project is about the environmental elements of an age friendly city. The aim is to better understand the benefit and the value of Green Infrastructure (GI) for older people and how GI attributes and interventions can best support the health and well-being of an ageing population. The project uses Greater Manchester as a case study. JH felt that the Forum, either collectively, or members individually could usefully contribute to issues surrounding the valuation of GI and this could be taken forward in a seminar or even in a conference with Forum members invited.

The Carbon Landscape Project. Presentation by Joanne Tippett

The project focuses on the Social, Holistic, Awareness-raising, Positivity and Experience of connecting people to the natural environment to build skills in sustainability thinking; a round view of sustainability. The case study area is the Greater Manchester Wetlands between Liverpool and

Manchester (Mosslands and Flashes surrounding Wigan, Culcheth and Cadishead). See <http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/posts/2017/03/joining-forces-for-a-sustainable-future/>

Environment Plan for Birmingham and the West Midlands. Presentation by Nick Grayson.

A 25 year environment plan which is not just about money and provision but one primarily concerned with developing a new system building the value of natural capital into planning tools covering the growth in population and housing. It is developing a tool which integrates the environment with the economy that can be scaled down to local level with the hope that this will eventually become a National Standard. Birmingham is part of the International Biophilic City Network, cities that achieve a deep affinity with nature by putting nature at the top of thinking.

Discussion centred on the problem of converting research into action and it was suggested that austerity might in fact provide new opportunities to do so.

Routledge Urban Ecology Handbook. Briefing from Ian Douglas.

ID requested ideas from members of the Forum and undertook to circulate notes to members.

Actions:

- **Urban Pioneer: PF to provide NE with findings from Wales**
- **GHIA Project: The Forum to produce a position statement for the project covering potential input by both the Forum as a whole and by individual members. All members to liaise with RS and JH (JH is also a member of the GHIA project steering group).**
- **Handbook of Urban Ecology, Second Edition: ID to circulate notes to Forum members. Members to provide ID with ideas and offers to contribute.**
- **NL to distribute all presentations to members.**

Status and future of the Form/finalising the name for the Group

RS reported that whilst the Forum will retain a link to UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Program it will no longer be able to use the UNESCO MAB name, the claim being that UNESCO Paris no longer has an interest in urban issues. The UK Biosphere Group has said how sorry they are about this.

ID undertook to investigate a potential for a link with other UNESCO organisations such as UNEP (UN environment programme) and UN Habitats, both of which are interested in urban environments.

PF pointed out the importance regarding raising funds to sustain the Forum of trying to link the Forum to international programmes

Various ideas on renaming the Group, and how to do so, were discussed at length. After much consideration, it was agreed that **UK Urban Ecology Forum** succinctly describes exactly what the Forum is and does and the meeting recommends this name to members.

Actions:

- **ID to investigate potential for a link with other UNESCO organisations such as
 - o **UNEP (UN environment programme) and UN Habitats****

- ***Members to give consideration to renaming the Forum “UK URBAN ECOLOGY FORUM” and to inform NL of any concerns and, if so, to suggest alternatives.***

Next meeting: Late October or early November, possibly at Linnean Society in London. Members will be advised in good time.