



**Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held on 15 May 2002 at the National Wildflower Centre, Liverpool.**

**Present**

Penny Angold	(PA)	University of Birmingham
Ian Douglas	(ID)	University of Manchester
Mathew Frith	(MF)	English Nature
Pete Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales
Graham Leeks	(GJLL)	CEH Wallingford
Grant Luscombe	(GL)	Landlife, National Wildflower Centre
Susan Renn	(SR)	(Secretary) CEH Wallingford
Peter Shirley	(PS)	(Acting Chair), The West Midlands Wildlife Trusts
Graham Turnbull	(GT)	London Wildlife Trusts
Matthew Wilkinson	(MW)	CURE, University of Manchester

**1. Apologies and Welcome**

Ian Angus	(IA)	John Handley	(JH)
George Barker	(GB)	Carolyn Harrison	(CH)
John Box	(JB)	Peter Jarvis	(PJ)
Gerald Dawe	(GD)	David Nicholson-Lord	(DNL)
Dave Dawson	(DD)	John Robbins	(JR)
David Goode	(DG)	Matthew Thomas	(MT)
Chris Gordon	(CG)		

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record, (except for section 12.2 which should read “Members of the Forum are encouraged to seek funding from their *employers....*”); proposed by GJLL, seconded by PF.

**3. Approval of Annual Report for 2001/02 and Work Programme for 2002/03 (Circulated to Members) (PS)**

After some discussion, which highlighted the strengths of the Forum as its flexibility to respond to and/or create opportunities, the need to bring items to closure promptly and the need to foster links with decision-makers/specialists, the Annual Report was approved, while the Work Programme was accepted provisionally.

**Action 3.1** JB to invite Chief Executive of CABE (Centre for Architecture & the Built Environment) to address December meeting.

**Action 3.2** JB to table Work Programme as a main agenda item for the September meeting in order to consider focus, longer term view, audience etc.

#### **4. Review of the UK MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence (Chris Gordon)**

CG was not present.

##### **Presentation of the results of the review undertaken by Graham Turnbull (LWT) and discussion on the way forward.**

GT presented the results of his review of the UK-MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence. A final copy of this will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

**Action 4.1** Views of non-attendees of this meeting are sought as to the content of GT's review, and in particular as to options for the future.

**Action 4.2** This matter to be delegated (to MF, PF (limited time available) and CG (if possible)) to report back to the next meeting on options for the future and results of preliminary investigations as to potential partners.

PS thanked GT for his work so far and his offer to remain involved in the short term.

#### **4A Additional item from Mathew Frith**

MF outlined the background to the work he had undertaken in respect of the England Biodiversity Strategy's Urban & Development workstream for DEFRA (draft circulated to members last week). MF sought, and received, comments on the draft and ideas for additional content from attendees. He will acknowledge the Urban Forum's input in the final version.

#### **4B Additional item from Ian Douglas**

ID reported on the meeting on urban ecosystems in March, noting that the importance of the urban environment was being more widely recognised and that there were a number of new initiatives. (Notes from this to be circulated with the minutes.)

#### **5. Progress Reports on Topics in Work Programme**

##### **Topic 1 – Development of the MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence**

See Item 4 of these Minutes.

##### **Topic 2 – Recombinant ecology: Exploration of the practical implications of exotic species in urban floras and faunas in relation to native communities**

No action.

##### **Topic 3 – Urban Biosphere Reserves: extending the concept of biosphere reserves to urban areas**

PF had made a presentation on Urban Biosphere Reserves in Birmingham and had made some useful contacts. There is also a Biosphere Workshop in October/November, which PF will probably attend. He will be seeking funding to attend various conferences in order to promote the topic.

There was some discussion as to possible sites (including Dyfi (favoured by PF as the best way ahead), Ironbridge, the Pennines (including major cities to the East and West) and the Mersey (in the light of the Mersey Basin Campaign).

**Action 5.1** ID to follow this up.

#### **Topic 4 – Review of social and community criteria for selection of Local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation**

This topic produced much discussion. The consensus was that a one-day seminar/workshop to consider the issues should be held in Bristol (or London).

Invitees will be those who influence decision-makers: DEFRA, local government & other interested parties. Kevin Charman (General Manager, English Nature) should also be given the opportunity to put his viewpoint. Ken Webster (new Head of the Sustainability Unit at the Improvement and Development Agency of the Local Government Association.) should also be involved.

Given the time-scale (the DEFRA decision is around September), planning and organisation needs to start immediately. GL volunteered some assistance with this.

**Action 5.2** GJLL to track down finance (approx. £1,400) to fund this workshop.

**Action 5.3** GJLL suggested that the Urban Forum (JB) writes to Hilary Neal (DEFRA), as she now has a role in MAB, regarding the possibility of setting up this event.

**Action 5.4** PF to “braindump” what needs doing so that GL’s team can get started on planning & organising.

**Action 5.5** JB to check if CH’s notes have been submitted to DEFRA.

#### **Topic 5 – Carbon Sequestration in urban forestry**

No news.

#### **Topic 6 – Urban Parks and Semi-natural Open Spaces**

A final version of CG & PS’s paper “All Things To All People – Parks And Semi-Natural Open Spaces In 21st Century Britain” to be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

**Action 5.6** Any objections to the paper being issued as “the view of the Urban Forum” to be received within one month of the issue of the Minutes. If objections are received, it will be issued as a paper authored by Chris Gordon and Peter Shirley, members of the UK-MAB Urban Forum.

#### **Topic 7 – Identification of benefits for mental health and well-being from Urban Greenspace**

No news.

**Action 5.7** ID will supply some relevant information for SD & IA.

## **Topic 8 – Development of Urban Forum web site**

No problems were reported with this, and it was said to be easy to use. More publications currently in hard copy should be put onto the website.

**Action: 5.8** SR to upload GB's Local Nature Reserves booklet and any other publications that become available electronically.

**Action 5.9** ALL: New entries and information for the web-site invited.

## **Topic 9 – Integrated European Research Programme on the Urban and Peri-Urban Environment**

**Action 5.10** GJLL will be providing a write-up on the workshop linked to the URGENT Science week in April, once all contributions are to hand.

## **Topic 10 – Explore funding sources for the work of the Urban Forum**

In hand.

## **Topic 11 – Contribution to UK-MAB Committee**

No news.

## **Topic 12 – Integrating biodiversity into new developments**

No news.

## **6. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting**

### **Review of Actions from previous meeting:**

#### **Completed:**

3.1, 4.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 8.1,  
12.3 (All attendees received a copy of the pamphlet. A copy will be sent with the minutes)

#### **In abeyance:**

4.4 PF to find out rates for a professional editor & inform JB asap.

#### **Incomplete**

- 4.3 Final version of Parks paper to be circulated with these minutes
- 9.1 Christine Bradley acceptance letter. To be confirmed by SR
- 11.1 JB & SR to follow up potential Groundwork representative on the Urban Forum.
- 11.2. The request has been made, and a reply is awaited from Chris Baines.
- 12.1 JB & GJLL have discussed. Formal policy still to be drafted
- 12.2 Peter Cush & Celia Spouncer are known to have spoken – outcome unknown.

## 7. Any Other Business

MF advised that English Nature has a new magazine “Urbio” and a report entitled “Revealing the Value of Nature”. He can be contacted to obtain further information or copies of these.

## 8. Dates of Next Meetings

17 September 2002 – Groundwork UK, Bennett’s Hill, Birmingham

11 December 2002 – To be confirmed

### Corrections to the minutes after issue:

- Topic 3: PF’s presentation was in Birmingham, not Rome as originally stated in the minutes. Spelling of Dovey amended to Dyfi.

### Annexes

Info from Ian Douglas re Paris ) to be circulated when available  
Urban Forum pamphlet )

Parks paper ) to be circulated with the Minutes  
GT’s Award Review )

## **Action List**

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