



Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held on 17 September 2002 at Groundwork West Midlands, Birmingham.

Present

Penny Angold	(PA)	University of Birmingham
Ian Angus	(IA)	Scottish Natural Heritage
George Barker	(GB)	Independent Consultant
John Box	(JB)	(Chair) Wardell Armstrong
Dave Dawson	(DD)	Greater London Authority
Ian Douglas	(ID)	University of Manchester
Pete Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales
Peter Morgan	(PM)	Groundwork (in place of Richard Sharland)
David Nicholson-Lord	(DNL)	Environmental Journalist
Susan Renn	(SR)	(Secretary) CEH Wallingford
Peter Shirley	(PS)	The West Midlands Wildlife Trusts
Matthew Thomas	(MT)	Brighton & Hove Council

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies

Mathew Frith	(MF)	Graham Leeks	(GJLL)
Chris Gordon	(CG)	Grant Luscombe	(GL)
John Handley	(JH)	Richard Sharland	(RS)
Carolyn Harrison	(CH)	Matthew Wilkinson	(MW)
Peter Jarvis	(PJ)		

JB welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Groundwork for hosting it.

JB reported several membership changes:

- Mathew Frith has a new job with the Peabody Trust but will be remaining in the Forum. (*Secretary's Note: new contact details can be found on the website.*)
- the death of Christine Bradley
- the resignation of Nadia Little
- the resignation of George Barker due to his many other commitments. JB thanked GB on behalf of the Forum for all his efforts & contributions over the years.

Action 1.1 JB to write to GB to formally express the Forum's thanks and appreciation.

Before beginning the meeting proper, JB circulated the following items:

- the programme for the EuroMAB conference (PF will be attending & representing CCW and the Forum)
- a list of speakers for the Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management's November conference on Urban Issues. Contact details for these are sought as JB is trying to contact them urgently to arrange the conference.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were signed as an accurate record.

3. Urban Forum Finances

JB reported that there is a much clearer picture of the Forum's income and expenditure now that the Secretariat is with CEH. This will be looked at in more detail at the December meeting.

He confirmed that £5,000 (inc. VAT) has been received from English Nature – this funds the Secretariat, travel expenses & meeting costs. A further £2,000 (plus VAT) had been received from CCW. This funds website development/maintenance plus special projects (none currently allocated).

4. Discussion of the Work Programme for 2003/04 *(not 2002/03 as stated on the Agenda)*

This item arises from the May 2002 meeting. JB introduced this item, commenting that the Work Programme has been going for 10-15 years, rolling on from year to year with minor amendments. The time had therefore come to ask whether the Work Programme still matched the Forum's ideals. Members were asked to re-visit the fundamental objectives of the Forum and their membership of it. Relevant questions include:

- why they are on the Forum
- what professional / personal objectives they have in being there?
- Should they continue their membership of the Forum?
- Who else should be on the Forum?
- Forum procedures and level of formality?

GB then gave a brief history of the Forum from its earliest days (1978) to the current day.

PF then led those present in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, followed by a visioning exercise, in order to get a clear picture of where the Forum wants to be in ten years' time.

Action 4.1 PF/SR to distribute outputs from this session separately.

5. Progress against the Work Programme

SR distributed a document containing updates against the current Work Programme.

Action 5.1 SR to load September Work Programme progress update onto the website.

6. Matters arising

Jon Rouse (Chief Executive of CABE (Centre for Architecture & the Built Environment)) was unavailable to address the December meeting.

Action 6.1 JB to invite Jon Rouse (CABE) to address a future meeting.

UK MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence: Actions 4.1 & 4.2 from previous meeting still outstanding. (*Secretary's note: CG is arranging a meeting with PF & Graham Turnbull to take matters forward.*)

Regarding the proposed workshop on social and community criteria for selection of Local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (Actions 5.2, 5.3 & 5.4 from the May meeting relate.), DEFRA's lead (Jenny Wilson) will no longer be involved due to a work promotion. It is understood that Kevin Charman (EN) will rewrite the document to incorporate comments received but that the main thrust of the document will remain unchanged. DEFRA have declined the offer of a seminar. However, it may still be possible / desirable to run the seminar. It is noted that Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland may take a different position, as they have their own organisations equivalent to DEFRA.

Action 6.2 DEFRA letter re proposed workshop to be circulated to members.

Action 6.3 PF/JB to pursue the running of a workshop, as appropriate.

Chris Gordon & Peter Shirley's "Parks" paper is now complete.

Action 6.4 PS to liaise with CG re publishers to whom article should be submitted.

Review of Outstanding Actions from February 2002 meeting:

Completed:

4.3, 4.4, 9.1, 11.2, 12.1

Incomplete:

- 11.1 Potential Groundwork representative on the Urban Forum. This option remains open, awaiting response from Richard Sharland.
- 12.2 Peter Cush & Celia Spouncer – communication on-going re establishing Northern Ireland representation on the Forum.

Review of Outstanding Actions from May 2002 meeting:

Completed:

- 3.1 Jon Rouse (CABE) invited for December but declined.
- 3.2 Work programme tabled at September meeting.
- 5.1 ID now has materials to look at the various Urban Biosphere Reserve areas. He will report back at a future meeting. Action discharged.
- 5.2 GJLL has established that funds for workshop exist.
- 5.3 DEFRA contacted re workshop, but they declined.
- 5.4 Done.

- 5.5 CH's notes were submitted directly to DEFRA.
- 5.6 Parks paper finished.
- 5.8 No electronic version of GB's Local Nature Reserves booklet available. Not to be uploaded.
- 5.9 No news or updates for website received.

Incomplete:

- 4.1 Follow-up on Award for Excellence - in hand with CG.
- 4.2 Follow-up on Award for Excellence - in hand with CG.
- 5.7 ID to supply information on Identification of benefits for mental health & well-being from Urban Greenspace to SD & IA.
- 5.10 GJLL to provide write-up on workshop from URGENT Science week.
(Secretary's note: GJLL advises that all presentations and rapporteurs' reports from the European Workshop supported by the Urban Forum have been placed on the Forum Website. It is hoped that a further combined summary report will be produced during October.)

7. Any Other Business

- a) Dave Dawson provided copies of "Connecting with London's Nature" – The Mayor of London's Biodiversity Strategy for the Greater London Authority (GLA), July 02. Further copies available via the GLA website (*Secretary's note: see <http://www.london.gov.uk/approot/mayor/strategies/biodiversity/index.jsp>*)
- b) Peter Morgan provided copies of "Ecoregen" – which is a summary of the work done with Manchester University (CURE). The website contains details of the outputs of the work. Case studies are sought. (*Secretary's note: see <http://www.ecoregen.com>*)
- c) PF will be attending EuroMAB in Rome in October. His presentation will be similar to that he gave at Birmingham. (*Secretary's note: a link to this can be found at http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk/ESF_URGENT_EuroMAB_UF/Agenda.htm.*)
- d) MF had asked that EN's Urbio magazine be considered for the Award for Excellence. The consensus was that the magazine certainly merited the award, but there was concern about continuity now that MF has left EN, and that coverage is currently restricted to England.

It was therefore agreed to postpone making the award for 6 months, by which time it was anticipated that these issues would be clearer.

Action 7.1 JB to discuss continuity and national coverage of Urbio with MF's former line manager.

- e) JB announced that Chris Baines has agreed to speak at the December meeting. His topic will be "Flooding, Urban Drainage & SUDS". Chris has agreed not to make a charge for this.
- f) SR distributed samples of the revised Urban pamphlet.

Action 7.2 SR to supply hard copies of the revised brochure to all members.

- g) GJLL had requested the Forum's thoughts on the forthcoming Urban Summit. Responses were that MF had submitted a list of names. PS had applied for a ticket. The Urban Wildlife Partnership, EN's policy department, NUFU & Landlife were involved in a single "fringe" event. This was being organised by Nerys Jones of NUFU.

Action 7.3 PS to report back to next meeting on the Urban Summit.

- h) PS suggested a possible new member, Simon Hughes, who he met at a recent EA conference. SH has just taken up a new post within EA "Urban Policy Advisor". He is keen on becoming involved in urban regeneration.

Action 7.4 SR/PS to invite Simon Hughes to the Forum's next meeting as an observer.

- i) DNL announced that the next booklet from the New Economics Foundation (a think-tank of which he is a member) "Green Cities & Why We Need Them" is due out this autumn. It will credit UK MAB & the Forum.

8. Dates of Next Meetings

11 December 2002 – GLA, City Hall, The Queens Walk, London SE1 2AA

25 February 2003 – Location to be confirmed

27 May 2003 – Location to be confirmed

16 September 2003 – Location to be confirmed

9 December 2003 – Location to be confirmed

It is intended that one of the 2003 meetings will be held in Swansea. It was agreed that it would also be good to hold a meeting in Scotland. IA expressed a willingness to organise this, if agreed. However, it was recognised that this would make travel more costly for most members.

Action 8.1 IA (& SNH) to seek funding to support the holding of a future meeting in Scotland.

Annexes

Letter from DEFRA re proposed workshop - to be circulated separately

Revised Urban Forum pamphlet - to be circulated separately

Info from Ian Douglas re Paris - to be circulated when available

Action List

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