



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 25 February 2003 at UMEC (University of Manchester Environment Centre).

Present

Ian Douglas	(ID)	Manchester University
Pete Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales
Chris Gordon	(CG)	East Midlands Region, Countryside Agency
John Handley	(JH)	CURE, University of Manchester
David Knight	(DK)	English Nature
David Nicholson-Lord	(DNL)	Environmental Journalist
Peter Shirley	(PS)	The West Midlands Wildlife Trusts (Acting Chair)
Katie Dodsley	(KD)	CEH Wallingford (Secretary)

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies

Penny Angold	(PA)	Graham Leeks	(GJLL)
Ian Angus	(IA)	Grant Luscombe	(GL)
John Box	(JB)	Susan Renn	(SR)
Peter Cush	(PC)	John Robbins	(JR)
David Goode	(DG)	Richard Sharland	(RS)
Carolyn Harrison	(CH)	Matthew Wilkinson	(MW)
Peter Jarvis	(PJ)	Mathew Frith	(MF)

PS welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked JH and UMEC for hosting it.

PS asked KD to pass on thanks from the Forum to Susan Renn for doing an excellent job as Secretary, and to wish her luck in the future.

At JB's suggestion DK, of English Nature, was proposed, by PS as a full member of the Forum. PF seconded the proposal. DK gave a brief description of his interests and role in English Nature as Urban Adviser.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were signed by PS as an accurate record.

3. Finalisation of the Work Programme for 2003/04 (Led by PF)

Attendees separated to finalise the six previously defined work programmes and determine project titles, aims and objectives, topic leaders and deputies, other contributors, resources required, a resource acquisition plan and a communications plan. The human dimensions of urban life topic was merged with the health topic. The five topics are now:

- Climate change impacts
- Practical benefits of designing in & managing for nature
- Planning & multi-functional green networks
- Health and human dimensions of urban ecosystems
- City metabolism – resources & flows

The finalised work programme topics will be distributed on completion by PF and KD.

Action 3.1 – PF and KD to finalise and distribute the work programme topics.

PS thanked PF for all his hard work on the Work Programme topics.

4. Annual Report

PS suggested that the structure of the Annual Report be altered so that after the introduction, the general Urban Forum information is made Appendix 1, and the Work Programme follows the introduction.

Action 4.1 - KD to make changes to the Annual Report

5. Progress reports on Topics in the Work Programme

Development of the MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence – This will be carried forward to the next financial year and reported on at the next meeting.

Urban Biosphere reserves: extending the concept of biosphere reserves to Urban Areas – PF gave an overview – this topic will be carried forward to the next financial year, as details may change.

Review of Social and Community Criteria for selection of Local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation – DK is preparing a draft paper for DEFRA which once completed can possibly be shared amongst other agencies, to gain interest.

Urban Parks and Semi-natural Open Spaces – PS and CG are pleased with the positive result they received and a shortened version of the Parks Paper will be published in the March issue of Landscape Design.

Action 5.1 – KD to add the updated paper on the website

Development of Urban Forum Website – The Forum noted that the website works well, and the maintenance of it needs to be continued.

Urban Greenspace Standards – This will continue in 2003/04.

Green Roofs – DK hoping to get report printed this week. The Forum decided that the report could be accredited by the Forum and use the MAB logo.

Action 5.2 – KD to add Green Roofs Report to the Forums accredited discussion papers and publications list and to provide MAB Paris with a copy of the report.

6. Urban Forum Finances

Members were asked their views on in the financial paper (Annex 1),

- i) It was decided that the allocation to the Secretariat and special projects was sufficient.
- ii) The Forum noted with thanks CCW's offer to increase their level of funding and that JB needs to review with English Nature their level of support.

Action 6.1 – JB to apply for the funding from CCW and review funding with English Nature

iii) There is a balance of £1912.50 available under Special Projects (See Annex 2 – Financial break down of budget). It was decided to allocate this to a workshop on “What is Nature?”

7. Matters arising

i) ID gave a brief description of the Millennium Assessment project that he is involved with and agreed to circulate a short paper on it.

Action 7.1 – ID to circulate a note on the Millennium Assessment

- ii) GJLL sent a note that the URGENT finale would now be a combined workshop promoting URGENT science and discussing the way forward, to be held end of November/beginning of December. GJLL will circulate an agenda once it is set.
- iii) The Land Restoration Trust is in the process of being set up. PS thought it would be good for the Forum to have a link to the Trust once it is established. RS will be a link between the Forum and the Trust, as Groundwork UK is involved with both.
- iv) The Forum decided it would be a good idea to have somebody from CABE involved with the Forum on a regular basis. Action 6.1 from September 2002 meeting was reopened.

Action 7.2 – JB to invite a CABE representative to join the Urban Forum.

8. Any Other Business

i) The Forum agreed that 27 May 2003 was not the best date for the next meeting as few people would be able to attend.

Action 8.1 – PF to determine available dates at Swansea, in the first week of June.

Action 8.2 – KD to circulate the available dates to Forum members and set a date.

ii) Arrangements for future meetings – in discussion with JB, he suggested Birmingham as the venue for the September meeting and London for the December meeting.

iii) If anybody would like a copy of the report PF did for EuroMAB in Rome, let him know.

9. Dates of Next Meetings

TBC May/June 2003 – Swansea
16 September 2003 – Birmingham
9 December 2003 – London

Annexes

Finance Paper
CEH Break down of Expenditure

Action List

Action 3.1 – PF and KD to finalise and distribute the work programme topics.

Action 4.1 - KD to make changes to the Annual Report and circulate

Action 5.1 – KD to add the updated paper on the website

Action 5.2 – KD to add Green Roofs Report to the Forums accredited discussion papers and publications list and to provide MAB Paris with a copy of the report.

Action 6.1 – JB to apply for the funding from CCW and review funding with English Nature.

Action 7.1 – ID to circulate a note on the Millennium Assessment

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Action 8.1 – PF to determine available dates at Swansea, in the first week of June.

Action 8.2 – KD to circulate the available dates to Forum members and set a date.

Outstanding Actions:

Review of Outstanding Actions from May 2002 meeting:

<u>Incomplete:</u>	
4.1 Follow-up on Award for Excellence - in hand with CG.	Ongoing
4.2 Follow-up on Award for Excellence - in hand with CG.	Ongoing
5.7 ID to supply information on Identification of benefits for mental health & well-being from Urban Greenspace to SD & IA.	Action point remains open.

Review of Outstanding Actions from September 2002 meeting	
Info from Ian Douglas re Paris to be circulated when available	Information awaited.

Action List from September 2002 meeting:	
Action 6.1 JB to invite Jon Rouse (CABE) to address a future meeting.	JB wrote but Jon Rouse could not make date. On hold pending review of work programme.
Action 8.1 IA (& SNH) to seek funding to support the holding of a future meeting in Scotland	Ongoing. This is part of the current work programme and will be captured in report for 2002/03. This Action Point can be closed.

The current review of the work of the Urban Programme will result in changes to the work of the Urban Forum that will be set out in the work programme for 2002/03. In the light of this review, it is timely to examine the sources of funding for the Urban Forum.

The main sources of income come from English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). These are augmented by 'in kind' contributions from the organisation providing the secretariat (currently the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, previously the Wildlife Trusts).

English Nature has provided £4,255 (exclusive of VAT) annually for a number of years under a contract with a specification under which the Urban Forum assists in the delivery of certain elements of the English Nature work programme. The Countryside Council for Wales has provided £2,000 (exclusive of VAT) since 2000/01 as a contribution towards the overall cost of the work of the Urban Forum.

The Urban Forum produces a Work Programme annually at the start of each financial year which is combined with an Annual Report for the previous financial year. This document is sent to both English Nature and CCW as justification for the financial contributions. In addition, outputs relevant to each organisation are made available during the course of the year whether as policy papers and discussion documents or as workshops and conferences on particular issues.

These financial contributions are allocated to two main spending areas. Firstly, the provision of the secretariat and the costs associated with holding four meetings each year in terms of room hire, lunch & refreshments, and travel expenses for members of the Urban Forum who are not able to obtain support from their employers. Secondly, the provision of the Urban Forum website and its maintenance and development. Currently, it is expected that there will be a credit balance of around £2K (currently under the Special Projects head) at the end of this financial year.

The financial contributions are currently allocated in three ways:

- a) The English Nature contribution funds the secretariat and the costs of the meetings
- b) Half of the CCW contribution is allocated to website maintenance and development
- c) Half of the CCW contribution is held for special projects such as the review by the London Wildlife Trust of the UK-MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence.

Informal discussions have taken place over the past two years with the Countryside Agency, the Environment & Heritage Service and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). These agencies are very supportive of the work of the Urban Forum and have indicated that they would be willing to consider contributing to appropriate projects. Furthermore, SNH ensures that Ian Angus attends meetings of the Urban Forum which rotate primarily between London, Birmingham and Manchester. The possibility of a meeting of the Urban Forum in Edinburgh is being explored as a further contribution by SNH to the work of the Urban Forum.

Views are sought from members on :

- i) The allocation of the financial contributions to the secretariat, the website and special projects
- ii) The levels of contributions from English Nature and CCW
- iii) Bids for the current balance of around £2K for Special Projects
- iv) The need for further financial contributions and potential sources of funds.

John Box (Chair)

30 November 2002

Annex 2 - Breakdown of Costs