



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

**Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting
held 12 December 2006 at
Groundwork Offices, Birmingham.**

Present

Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent consultant (Chair)
Lucy Ball	(LB)	CEH Wallingford (Outgoing secretary)
Nick Jackson	(NJ)	CEH Wallingford (Incoming secretary)
Peter Morgan	(PM)	Groundwork
Alison Milward	(AM)	Environmental Consultant
Peter Frost	(PF)	CCW
Alan Scott	(AS)	Urban Wildlife
Ian Angus	(IA)	SNH

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies have been received from David Goode, Ian Douglas, Grant Luscombe, Matthew Frith, Julie Proctor, Eilidh Johnston, Peter Jarvis, Peter Cush and Graham Leeks.

GD welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Sept 2006 meeting were signed by GD as an accurate record, with the following correction:

- Errata: Page 3 – NJ to replace ‘subsistence’ by ‘subsidence’.

3. Matters arising from minutes

- Item 5: FC involvement – has anyone mentioned NUFU’s ‘Trees Matter’? – NJ to follow up on these and update leaflets. GD – FC involvement difficult but possibilities still exist. Marcus Sangster (Edinburgh University) – project on health impacts.

Action points outstanding:

- GD to contact JLW to check progress (diversity and disadvantage needs to be added as a theme within the UF Work Package)

4. UK-MAB Urban Forum Secretary

LB reported that work requirements mean she has to relinquish her role as Urban Forum Secretary. GD thanked LB for all her work and thanked her for all her work and presented her with the gift of a book (*Cities of Tomorrow* – Peter Hall).

Dr Nick Jackson, also from CEH is taking over as Secretary to the Urban Forum – he can be contacted at: UF-SEC@wpo.nerc.ac.uk

5. 'Statins and Greenspaces' conference: progress and planning

GD has had a meeting with UCL staff and has obtained the use of a lecture theatre and networking areas outside, free of charge. Thanks to David Goode were noted. GD: to send letter to UCL to ask them to invoice 'payment in kind', as this affects UF financial situation/accounts.

- Mark Maslin and Dana Priddy-Sale are acting as the two UCL contacts.
- Three speakers have committed so far – including Ian Douglas, and William Bird (Natural England), both to speak on 'Mental health relationships with Urban greenspace'; Carolyn Stephens will talk on 'Urban health – majority world'; Helen Townsend and Liz O'Brien from the Forestry Commission will both speak.
- We expect to have nine speakers. It is envisaged that each speaker will have 20 mins per talk.
- GD reported that it is hoped a Junior Government Minister will attend the day.
- A panel forum format was suggested. UCL will expect some of their people to be on the panels. MM and DG to allocate three UCL speakers and let UF know who they are.
- Suggestions for other speakers: JLW had suggested a focus on urban ethnic minority groups.
- AM: Public health person on 'Health targets' – AM to send contacts to GD, (including a sense of the critical path concept for public health). Multiple benefits – physical (green gym), mental (green spaces) – general therapeutics.
- IA: NIHC working on this area. Also: Kim Fellows (SE Biodiversity Chair) – formally involved in public health and planning. (Could be replacement for Russell). Also contacts in NHS Scotland who might be able to make further public health suggestions. IA to send email contacts to GD.
- It was agreed that it would be good if we could get decision-makers/assistants to attend the conference – more important to ensure outputs have 'bite' that will be taken forward.
- The merits of using rapporteurs and/or taking 'full transcript' approaches were discussed. GD and NJ to check/investigate the latter, as it makes the publication of a 'yellow book' easier.
- AM willing to chair (possible pm session). AM to check on public health contacts.
- GD willing to be rapporteur for one session.
- PM: suggested contacting *Greenspace* for public health contacts.
- AS: Work on health/urban environment in the Netherlands. European dimension could be useful.
- Mental health dilemma – many green spaces are 'through routes', people don't stop to observe. How to address this: maybe one of the speakers could address it? Not all agreed; not everybody was considered that fit and moving that fast to miss the benefits of their surroundings.
- AS: important to stress the quality of greenspace for health benefits, not just the general availability. However, encroachments of current greenspace from the Growth Agenda – should also be stressed (linked) in conference.
- GD to ask Clive Harridge – chair of Royal Town Planners Institute (based at Entec, Leamington Spa) – into sustainable development/local communities and would be good speaker on assessment of greenspace quality.
- IA: suggested contacting CABESpace – they have been mapping greenspace areas. Julie Procter from *Greenspace* Scotland.
- GD: Element of brief should address the connection between people, health and ready access to size and quality (mentioning biodiversity) of urban greenspace. This was agreed.

- Possible future challenges – climate change impacts on biodiversity, which then impacts on health etc. PM: suggested John Handley.
- Action on all UF members to forward other suggestions to GD a.s.a.p.
- UF intend publishing proceedings as PDF. Additional expenses such as T&S, fliers.
- The costs of the conference are estimated at £2K - £3K. UF agreed to charge £50 per person.
- Public health directors from PCTs around UK are to be invited. IA, PF and AM to investigate mailing lists for these. NIHCE also to be invited.
- UF should also invite representatives from Natural England (Health Campaign) and Sports Development Officers from Local Government.
- Urban Wildlife Network – AS to obtain mailing list. Selective letters to groups with paid staff only (e.g. wildlife trusts).
- DCLG and other Central Government bodies. IA and PF to come up with names. NJ to check with Faith Culshaw (NERC).
- UF considers that we should prioritise politicians & central Government representatives, public health directors, etc.
- NJ to compile list of potential delegates and circulate to group.

Category (environmental):	Nos.	Category (health and medical):	Nos:
CE, Urban Wildlife Network	20?	UCL medical school?	10?
CE, Open Spaces Society	1?	NIHCE	
CE, London Tree Officers Assoc.	1?	CE, Ass GPs Urban Deprived Areas-AGUDA	1
CEs, City Farms + Community Gardens	10?	Sport Development Directors (LA structure)	
CE, Nat Soc Allotments/Leisure Gardeners.	1	Sport England	
CE, Inst. Leis. Amen. Mgmt. (ILAM)	1	MRC?	
CE, Plant Life	1		
Ed, Environment & Urbanisation (IIED)	1		
CE, Green Space (charity)	1		
CE + Chair, Landscape Institute	2?		
CE, Black Environment Network	1		
CE, Sustrans	1		
CE, National Playing Fields Assoc.	1		
Speakers (+ UK-MAB members):	5?	Speakers (+ UK-MAB members):	5?
Academics: urban greenspace	5?	Academics: health and envt.	10?
RSPB			
Thrive (Horticultural Therapy)			
New Institution of Greenspace			
RTPI			
Town & Country Planners Assoc			
NERC Science into Policy Group			
Academy for Sustainable Communities?			
DCLG + other Central Government bodies.			
Design ... (Wales CABE equivalent)			
Sustainable Development Commission			
Forum for Development (Porritt)			
Creating Common Ground Consortium (NI)			
LGAs, IDAs etc.			
Totals:	50?		50?

6. Progress on the work programme

- PF is still waiting for volunteers for writing chapters for the Review
- Urban biosphere reserves – PF has written paper for the MaB/ICC coordinating council.
- GD and AS to visit HMP Maidstone a.s.a.p., but need contact details supplying.
- PF: a couple of possibilities for Awards – ‘Roots and Shoots’ and ‘Lingwell Gardens’.

7. Review of UK-MAB Urban Forum membership

- Two new members to consider: Joe Ravetz (Uni Manchester). Proposed by PF, seconded by IA. V. useful contact for UF. Accepted.
- Brian Macdonald: UF need to see a CV and/or more evidence of urban work. Decision deferred.
- Dave Dawson – retired from GLA. UF agreed that GLA doesn’t get an automatic UF replacement, but should invite Dave to continue as UF member. AS will find out his new contacts.
- Peter Shirley retired – no longer to serve on UF.

8. Any Other Business

- Back issues of MaB yellow booklets – George Barker might have complete set. NJ to chase up.
- All other members of the Forum are requested to search out and send hard copies of MAB booklets to NJ, where they will be converted to ‘pdf’ format and returned.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 28 February – meeting venue TBA

Future meetings in 2007:

Tuesday 27 March – UF Conference “Statins and Greenspaces”, UCL

Tuesday 22 May – meeting venue TBA

Wednesday 5 September – meeting venue TBA

Tuesday 4 December – meeting venue TBA