



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 26 September 2007 at SNH, Edinburgh.

Present

Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent consultant (Chair)
Ian Angus	(IA)	SNH
Ian Douglas	(ID)	(Manchester University)
Peter Frost	(PF)	CCW
Eilidh Johnston	(EJ)	Greenspace Scotland
Nick Jackson	(NJ)	CEH Wallingford (Secretary)
Petra Zerebakova	(PZ)	Doctoral student, Czech Republic (observer)

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies have been received from:

John Box, Peter Cush, David Goode, John Handley, Peter Jarvis, Graham Leeks, Grant Luscombe, Alison Milward, Peter Morgan, David Nicholson-Lord, Joe Ravetz and Alan Scott.

- GD welcomed those attending to the meeting.
- EJ updated the Forum on progress on benchmarking quality of greenspace. Still debating how proscriptive the form should be. Pilot authorities have until November to comment on framework after which it would be rolled out to local authorities. Some already at point of wanting to commission people to undertake studies. EJ will circulate outline assessment forms to the rest of forum members. **A1**
- ID currently working on flooding in small urban streams – to write book on urban environment history. Working on chapter on ‘noise and odours’.
- IA – encouraging establishment of further LNRs. Activities include mapping of Greenspace.
- PF – pushing forward use of the Greenspace toolkit. Taken on new Environmental Health Officer. Possible pilot on greenspace hospitals in nearby hospital in Bangor.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- Approved as true and accurate record:

3. Matters arising

- A1: list of publications in annual report – ongoing. NJ to follow up **A2**.
- A3/D1: logging system to document decisions UF has made – GD to trawl previous minutes to compile list of decisions/operating principles. **A3**
- GD to forward list and PF/NJ to assess setting up of logging system. **A4**
- EJ has presentation on Greenspace mapping to present later.
- A4: Any review of urban ecology in the UK? – NJ to reiterate request in these minutes and ask for Forum feedback. **A5**
- ID could draw up a list of possible chapters that such a review should contain which could be discussed at the next meeting. (NJ to circulate this to Forum). **A6**
- A5 – GD has downloaded papers from RCEP but not received papers from DG – NJ to chase DG for these. **A7**
- A6 – ID will follow this up. Agreed that it is still a good idea to use some Forum resources to commission review.

- NJ to look at charging time to Forum to reduce surplus accruing, and/or making CEH's payment in kind explicit in finance reports – to discuss with GD. [A8](#)
- Possible SNH funding directed at specific publication (i.e. commissioned review) – IA to follow up. [A9](#)
- A16: HMP Maidstone prison – NJ had trawled minutes but although issues listed there was no identified contact. GD will follow up. [A10](#)

4. Work Programme and Sub-groups

- A13 – Excel version of document has been completed but hard copy not presented to meeting. NJ will circulate with the minutes for feedback. [A11](#)
- A14 – Peter Jarvis' paper has been completed and should be added to website. [A12](#)

Work Programme Update:

- 'Endless Village' – NJ to contact Pete Shirley to see if this has been published, and if available as PDF can it be added to website. [A13](#)
- *'Street Trees and Sustainability'*
- To be theme of next conference. GD to produce draft programme for this and circulate to Forum for comment. [A14](#)
- Also to look at climate change/changing climate.
- 'Removing trees make cities less 'liveable in' in the future'.
- Aim to publish proceedings and then follow up with yellow book that recommends standards.
- Need a paper on street tree cover diminution in the UK.
- ID: conference on Human Ecology in Manchester 29th June to July 3rd 2009. Forum could capitalise on this and sponsor a plenary speaker or even act as co-sponsor of the event? NJ to add this as an agenda item for next UF meeting. [A15](#)
- Consider something along the lines of greenspace and social cohesion. 'Urban greenspace and safe, secure, cohesive social communities?'
- PZ to send to NJ details of US research on feelings of security related to different environments. (action on IJ?) [A16](#)
- 'Urban Habitat Classification scheme' – possibly build this in as one output from 2009 conference. PF happy to see this issue overtaken by the new habitat prioritisation scheme (JNCC – 'how to draw up a priority list') – PF to email forum to explain/discuss. [A17](#)
- 'Working with CABE and CABE Space' – CABE has lost its work on health and the environment. Not sure how much of this work is continuing. GD to contact Matthew Frith to follow up on this issue. [A18](#)
- Maintaining UF financial stability – GD to contact David Knight to discuss position following changes under new 'Natural England'. [A19](#)
- 'Urban Biosphere Reserves' – PF to attend next meeting. Stockholm (Thomas Elmquist) has attracted serious funding. Big conference in Madrid Feb 2008 discussing biosphere reserves – important to have decent UK representation at this. UF to ask ID to write short update of his paper on biospheres – PF to resend MaB paper to ID. [A20](#)
- PF to email Forum to discuss opinion on 2010 conference. [A21](#)
- Assessment of quality of greenspace - EJ presented on Greenspace Scotland exercise on GIS Greenspace mapping.
- PF has a summary report of a similar study – Forum members should email him for a copy if interested. EJ will draw together a 'thinking paper' on quality vs. quantity of greenspace for a future meeting. [A22](#)

- ‘Why nature is good for you’ – ID will update this for the next meeting. NJ to remind ID to do this. **A23**
- Agreed it is still a good idea to get a small sub-group to meet and discuss work programme. GD will trawl agreed members for possible dates. **A24**
- NJ will circulate Excel version and ask members responsible to update delivery dates. **A25**
- MaB UF awards – ‘Meanwhile Garden’ and ‘Roots and Shoots’. GD will try and visit and assess these sites. **A26**

5. Statins and Greenspaces – Conference Proceedings

- Latest version from Alison Millward had been circulated and was tabled.
- GD to circulate to contributors, asking them to fill in the blue highlighted areas – one month to complete. **A27**
- GD would like to include a postscript caveat addressing continuing loss of greenspace (infilling gardens, loss of sports grounds etc.). Agreed it would be better to place this earlier in text addressing context etc.
- Agreed it should also include executive summary.
- Illustrations – GD is organising appropriate ones to include with the publication. ID suggested including 4 photos illustrating urban greenspace. Also physical exercise, mental relaxation, allotments?
- NJ to standardise style for diagrams and figures for final pre-publication draft. **A28**
- GD will circulate pre-publication draft to Forum members for comment and suggestions for final conclusions and recommendations. **A29**
- ‘Precautionary principle’ – need to maintain a given level of access to greenspace.

6. Website redesign

- GD and NJ to liaise over ISP details. **A30**
- Website aim to be operational within two weeks. NJ will email Forum when it goes live to ask for feedback on omissions and corrections. **A31**
- MaB award sites need to be there with updated links. Also all previous UF meeting minutes.

7. Membership of the Urban Forum

- Agenda item for next meeting proposing biennial review of membership asking all members if they want to continue. NJ to follow up. **A32**
- At the same time, consider proposing two or three new members each year.
- **D1:** PF proposed NJ as a member of the Urban Forum, seconded by ID. Agreed. *Postscript: It was decided, post- the Edinburgh meeting, by the Chair, that normal Urban Forum procedures should be applied regarding the appointment of new members. The Secretary needs to complete his post, submit a letter of application and CV to the Forum, and a decision can then be made at a future meeting.*
- Agenda item for next meeting that the Secretariat for the Forum will be retendered for in 2008, with a view to handing over after the 2008 UF conference NJ to follow up. **A33**
Postscript: the re-tendering of the Secretariat may need to take place much earlier than anticipated. Discussions will take place between GD, PF and David Knight regarding this.
- PF and GD still to investigate DEFRA high-level membership of Urban forum.

8. AOB

- Illustrations for Conference Proceedings – GD will circulate these to the Forum for comment via NJ.

- Meeting dates for 2008? GD and NJ to liaise on this and email list of dates and venues to the rest of the Forum. **A34**
- December agenda item on Madrid Feb 2008 meeting. PF to introduce. NJ to follow up. **A35**

9. Date of next meeting

- Tuesday 4th December at CEH Lancaster.