



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Draft minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 9th May 2008 at University College London (UCL)

1. Present

Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent consultant (Chair)
Ambra Burls	(AB)	Anglia Ruskin University
Ian Douglas	(ID)	University of Manchester
Mathew Frith	(MF)	Peabody Trust
David Goode	(DG)	University College London
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (Secretary)
Graham Leeks	(GLE)	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Grant Luscombe	(GLU)	Landlife, National Wildflower Centre

2. Apologies

Ian Angus, Peter Cush, Peter Frost, John Handley, Peter Jarvis, Eilidh Johnston, Alison Millward, Joe Ravetz.

Several members were unable to attend due to the late change of date and circulation of the agenda.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were approved.

4 Matters arising

- Outstanding actions from the last meeting were reviewed:
 - o A1 circulation of Guidance Framework and Audits and Strategy on Greenspace. NL to act on this **A1**
 - o A2 E-mail to group to ask for publications. Secretary to act on this **A2**
 - o A3 Logging system. GD has still to attend to this **A3**
 - o A4 DG to ask RCEP for permission to put the Desk Study on Urban Ecology on the Forum web site and to send it, and other papers of interest to the Forum from the RCEP, to NL for inclusion on the web site. **A4**
 - o A5 Offer from SNH to possibly provide some funding if Urban Forum organises a conference for them. This is now being dealt with.
 - o A6 Shirley paper has now been published. NL to contact AM and put details of on how to obtain the paper on the Forum web site **A5**
 - o A 7 Conference on Human Ecology in Manchester June 29th to July 1st 2009 is being arranged by ID. The Forum agreed to sponsor the conference without financial commitment. ID invited the Forum to hold a session or a workshop. GD agreed give a keynote speech- 8 key

speakers will be required and members should submit ideas on who else should be invited to ID or to NL **A6**

- A8 New BDAP action plan. PF still to circulate this to UK members **A7**
- A9 CABE space- MF to try to arrange for a member of Cabe Space to join the Forum and to try to arrange for Cabe Space to host the Forum's December 3rd. 2008 meeting **A8**
- A10 EJ paper. GD to chase **A9**
- A11 Dropped
- A12 Dealt with below under item 6 (a)
- A 13 Dealt with below under item 7 (c)
- A 14 Dropped
- A15 Tenders for the Secretariat were considered by PF and DG and it was decided to appoint Nigel Lawson. GD gave a warm welcome to NL for his second meeting of the Forum (he had stepped in, at very short notice, to be Secretary at a previous Manchester meeting).
- A16 A fixed price tender of £2,400 plus VAT and plus expenses was agreed.
- A17 NL to invite members to provide the Forum with their publications and research reports relevant to urban ecology and to either include them on the web site as a pdf file or to provide a link to where they can be found **A10**
- A 18 Done
- A 19 GD has written to thank Nick Jackson and will provide him with a modest gift on behalf of the Forum once closure of outstanding matters has been achieved **A11**
- A20 GD recommended the inclusion of a financial report showing separate accounts for each specific project at each meeting. This will be now be done by the secretary. **A12**
- A 21 Nominations of a Deputy Chair: to be discussed at the next meeting. **A13**
- A22 and A23 – see below.

5 Statins and Greenspaces

GD reported that 1000 copies of the report are now in print at Orphans Press at a total cost of £1,900 (say £2 each) and a pdf version should be available within a week or so. The report has been reduced from 72 to 64 pages.

Distribution:

- NL to contact NJ for a list of delegates to the conference and to send each delegate a copy
- GD to prepare a press release.
- AB to suggest journals and to send free review copies to Writtle College
- MF to suggest green magazines
 - NL to send free review copies to his contacts at Alzheimer's Society, TCPA and RTPI and also to organisations such as the Wildlife Trust BMJ and the Lancet. AB had had experience with the BMJ and her 'comment' piece concerning the health benefits of gardens had been accepted only after three resubmissions. Even then it had had to be revised and edited. This reflected (perhaps) both the nature of the

material and the fact the BMJ was a comparatively prestigious refereed journal. All members are requested to send their suggestions for organisations who should receive a free review copy to NL before the next meeting. **A14**

- Copies to be distributed free of charge (approximate numbers)
 - o 10 copies to each member (30 copies to AB) = circa 300 copies
 - o Delegates = circa 50 copies
 - o Speakers = 50 copies
 - o Free review copies = circa 200
- It was agreed that the balance of approximately 400 copies should be retained by NL at University of Manchester for sale at £5.00 per copy.

6 UK MAB designations and awards

GD had assessed two projects for awards, a) a novel piece of soil and habitat innovation, and b) a land-use project within Greater London. He had carried out a site visit regarding the latter and AB had greatly assisted in its evaluation.

- a) It was agreed to present a UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence to Landlife for *Soil Inversion Works*. Soil inversion is a novel technique for burying soil carbon and enhancing wildflower growth in and around urban forests.

GLU expressed his appreciation for the award and gave a brief description of Landlife's work on soil inversion over the last 5 years. NL to ask GLU for a pdf version for inclusion on the Forum web site **A15**

- b) It was agreed to present a UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence to *Meanwhile Wildlife Gardens*. Meanwhile Gardens in Westbourne Green, London (contact: David Scoffield, Kensington and Chelsea MIND). Meanwhile Gardens is a project which marries together notions of personal growth, mental health rehabilitation and rich urban biodiversity. ID proposed that the award be accompanied by a suitable citation such as "...exemplifies health and therapeutic benefits through community involvement". GD to send AB a draft citation **A16**

7 Conferences

- a) Street Trees and Sustainability:

GD proposed that the conference be held in autumn 2008 at either UCL or at Scottish National Heritage (SNH) in Edinburgh. He emphasised that the conference should be provocative and that it should address the removal of street trees, the tendency towards using smaller stock -plus infrastructure development and conflicts (e.g. between 'built' and 'green' infrastructure). This was agreed. GD to contact SNH and also London Tree Officers Association (Andy Tipping) **A17**
- b) Post-URGENT meeting:

GLE, the science co-ordinator of the URGENT programme felt that a meeting which would give momentum to urban research was timely, that there was a need to disseminate the outcomes of the URGENT programme. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) would be pleased to sponsor an event and UK MAB could provoke a programme which would look provocatively at how the URGENT outcomes can be used in society. GLE also said that auditors PWC had carried out research on economic outcomes from NERC research. Some areas of URGENT had

scored comparatively highly. GLE mentioned some key contacts as being Chief Scientific Advisor of DCLG (Mike Kelly) and the LGA's Tim Allen.

- c) Greenspace Toolbox. This was the idea of holding a meeting concerning urban site data, e.g. hydrological, air pollution-orientated, biodiversity, agricultural productivity, etc., and how they could be integrated into urban planning considerations. The Urban Forum was probably best placed to run a provocative 'sketch' meeting on these concepts, and to discuss how they could be integrated into planning, via GIS etc.

It was agreed to defer discussion on the post-URGENT meeting and also on the proposed Greenspace Toolbox conference until Pete Frost is able to attend, because of his specific expertise in this area. Both meetings have a provisional timetabled date of May 2009.

NL to ensure that these items remain on the agenda for the next meeting **A18**

8 A Handbook of Urban Ecology

ID reported that he is having success with an alternative publisher, that 22 authors (out of a potential 62) were confirmed and that he also had some potential editors. The hard copy book will be orientated towards practitioners and is thus different from other books on urban ecology which are currently in press. ID will try to obtain a percentage of the royalties for the Forum. The latest version of the outline document is attached hereto. **A19**

9 Work programme

GD to provide NL with the current work programme. NL to refresh the programme from time to time and to report it to the meetings of the Forum. **A20**

10 Financial report

GD reported on the Forum's finances. The former Secretary had recently reported to him on a minimum of £6K overall expenditure of the budget during FY 2007/2008. Thus, Urban Forum reserves were (apparently) down from c. £9-10K to only £4K within a year. GD thought this excessive. GLE argued that it was only a reflection of a realistic administrative cost of running the Forum. GD disagreed, stating that the current tender (accepted by NL) was for only £2.4K plus expenses. Financial issues would have to be resolved.

In the future, NL is to update, maintain and report on the financial situation at all meetings. Agreed [this should join with line below] that the Forum's moneys should be held in an account at the Co-op Bank in

Manchester and that two signatures should be required for all payments with GD, PF, ID and NL to be signatories. NL to meet with Nick Jackson as soon as possible to organise the transfer. **A21**

11 Any other business

- AB advised members of the conference to be hosted by MIND on June 2nd 2008 "*Ecotherapy and the Green Agenda for Mental Health*". Details are attached hereto.
- MF drew members attention to the Neighbourhoods Green and Natural England *A natural estate improving the green spaces for social housing* which is attached hereto.

12 Dates of future meetings

- Wednesday 24th September 2008 Edinburgh (Scottish Natural Heritage)
- Wednesday 3rd December 2008 London (location to be confirmed)
- Wednesday 25th February 2009 Manchester (University of Manchester)
- Wednesday 27th May 2009 London (location to be confirmed)