



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Draft minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 4th December 2008 at UCL, London

1. Present

Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent consultant (Chair)
Ian Angus	(IA)	Scottish National Heritage
Ambra Burls	(AB)	Anglia Ruskin University
Peter Cush	(PC)	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Peter Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (Secretary)
Graham Leeks	(GLE)	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Grant Luscombe	(GL)	Landlife, National Wildflower Centre
Alison Milward	(AM)	Independent consultant
Jamie Roberts	(JR)	Buglife (By invitation)
Alan Scott	(AS)	Independent consultant

2. Apologies

Ian Douglas, John Handley, Peter Jarvis, David Nicholson-Lord, Julie Proctor, Joe Ravetz.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were approved.

4 Matters arising

- Outstanding actions from the last meeting were reviewed:
 - o Request for publications for the Forum web site: NL to write to members who have not yet responded. **A1**
 - o A3 Logging system: To be discussed at the next meeting. GD will attend to this and see what has been done over the last few years. **A2**
 - o IA, PC and PF advised that they have submitted an inter-agency bid to SNH, CCW and NIEA (the inter-agency group) for funding for the Forum which has been accepted in principle. PC to report on progress. **A3**
 - o A5 The Shirley paper “The Endless Village” and how to apply for the full report is now on the web site.
 - o A 6 Conference on Human Ecology: Dealt with below under item 5 (d).
 - o A7 New BDAP action plan: PF undertook to provide NL with the Brownfield HAP Action Plan for circulation **A4**
 - o Circulation of Statins and Greenspaces: NL reported that he is still holding about 500 copies. GD to send letters to medical publications

etc. NL to send 25 copies to GL and 50 copies to both AB and PC for them to distribute **A5**

- UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence to *Meanwhile Wildlife Gardens*. GD and AB to attend to and to send them the award citation **A6**
- It was proposed to nominate *Roots and Shoots* for the UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence. Roots and Shoots provides vocational training for young people from the inner city, mainly from the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. AS and MF undertook to visit and to report. GD to provide NL with a pro-forma covering requirements for receipt of the Award for Excellence. **A7**

5. Presentation by Jamie Roberts, Biodiversity Projects Manager, Buglife- The Invertebrate Conservation Trust.

Brownfield sites provide an urban habitat for 15% of all Red Data Book invertebrates and are as important to invertebrates as ancient woodlands with at least 40 invertebrate species largely or wholly confined to brownfields. Buglife are building the evidence base for the importance of brownfield habitats for invertebrates. Their claim that the planning authority failed to consider PPS9 protection for the redevelopment of West Thurrock Marshes in the Thames Gateway is currently before the Court of Appeal.

NL to add Jamie Roberts presentation to the Forum web site **A8**

All members are requested to provide PF with knowledge of ecological surveys on previously developed land who will then feed them to Defra. **A9**

PF proposed and AS seconded the proposal that Buglife's legal process be nominated for UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence, based on how PPS9 is applied to the legal process. IA undertook to assess, along with Richard Robinson. **A10**

6. Nominations for a Deputy Chair

AB had (provisionally) accepted the invitation to stand. There were no further nominations. AB was duly offered the post of Deputy Chair of UK MAB Urban Forum, which she accepted.

7. Conferences

- a) Street Trees and Sustainability:

It was agreed to proceed with this conference, but to defer it until a Wednesday in September/October 2009. NL to try to obtain a suitable room at UCL **A11**

The concern is trees in the urban environment and the purpose of the conference is to change how urban trees are managed. The conference should be controversial and should reflect passion rather than just academic debate. It should have a catchy title such as "Conkers or Cancer". The conference should consider the case for and against street trees and should address issues such as health and well-being, economics, aesthetics, wind throw effects on trees, and insurance. Some recent historic matters (1980s)? such as street tree trenching might also prove relevant. The aim should be to change policy and practice. Participation by a celebrity and/or adaptation by a programme such as the BBC's Spring Watch or the One Show would provide exposure and this might be arranged through DNL's media

connections. Speakers proposed/organisation to be contacted included Ted Green (Ancient Tree Forum), James Ogilvie Social Policy Advisor Forest Commission Scotland, the insurance industry, urban planners, Manchester CC Green Team, Red Rose Forest, Mersey Forest Forum members are requested to suggest speakers. NL to liaise with GD and all Forum members and to coordinate responses **A12**

GD to submit a renewed plan to CCW and to approach the International Journal of Urban Forestry regarding publication of the proceedings. **A13**

b) Post-URGENT meeting:

GLE has material on ecological findings from the URGENT programme that there is synergy with UNESCO's Biosphere Research programme.

It was felt that an event would be useful and it was agreed that GLE would discuss with PF on how to take this forward and liaise with GD. **A14**

c) Greenspace Toolbox.:

Requires a workshop. Issues: Whilst many toolkits cover issues such as greenspace for health and wellbeing, playing fields and adaptation to climate change there is nothing on pollution control and there is a need to assess all types of green spaces and to provide a comprehensive guide which will reach all stakeholders including the private sector and be in accessible language for community groups.

A sub group of the Forum comprising PF, AB, GLE and GD agreed to take this forward. **A15**

NL to liaise with PF on possible synergies with University of Manchester's Eco City research programme. **A16**

d) International Conference on Human Ecology at University of Manchester June 29th to July 3rd 2009:

The Forum will be organising a workshop on Thursday June 2nd 10.00 to 16.00 which will be facilitated by PF. GD has identified speakers and will submit a synopsis. **A17**

GD will also deliver a keynote speech.

8. A Handbook of Urban Ecology

NL (in ID's absence) reported the handbook is progressing and that it will be published by Routledge.

9 Work programme

NL is updating the work programme. PF needs to submit the updated programme to UNESCO. NL to send the updated programme to GD for editing and to PF by December 12th The updated and finalised work programme will be put on the Forum's web site **A18**

9. Financial report

NL reported that the balance at 4th December 2008 stood at £6,158.00 of which £4,000.00 was now in a deposit account.

10. Any other business

- Helen Barber (Ashton University) has accepted an invitation to speak to the meeting to be held February 25th in Manchester on “Integrating biodiversity throughout the lifecycle of a major urban development project”.
- Philip James (University of Salford) has expressed interest in becoming a member of the Forum. It was decided that new applicants for membership of the Forum should be proposed and seconded by current members and that all members of the Forum should be given the opportunity to comment and that in the event of disapproval the application should be rejected. It was also agreed that in future due consideration should be given to the gender and ethnicity balance of the Forum's members. Philip James has been proposed by Joe Ravetz and seconded by Ian Douglas. NL to circulate members and, subject to no expressions of disapproval, to formally offer membership to Philip James. **A19**
- PF to liaise with JNCC regarding a Mosaic Habitat Working Group and to invite a consultant to address a future meeting of the Forum. **A20**

11. Dates of future meetings

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| • Wednesday 25 th February 2009 | Manchester (University of Manchester) |
| • Wednesday 27 th May 2009 | London (UCL- to be confirmed) |
| • Wednesday 23 rd September 2009 | Location to be confirmed |
| • Wednesday 9 th December 2009 | Location to be confirmed |