



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Draft Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 27th May 2009 at University College, London.

1. Present

Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent consultant (Chair)
Ian Angus	(IA)	Scottish National Heritage
Ambra Burls	(AB)	Anglia Ruskin University (Deputy Chair)
Peter Cush	(PC)	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
David Goode	(DG)	University College, London)
Peter Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (Secretary)
Alison Millward	(AM)	Independent Consultant
Grant Luscombe	(GLus)	Landlife, National Wildflower Centre

2. Apologies

John Box, Ian Douglas, Philip James, Eilidh Johnston, Graham Leeks, Peter Massini.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were approved.

4 Matters arising

Outstanding actions from the last meeting were reviewed:

- A1 Request for publications for the Forum web site: NL to write to members who have not yet responded. **A1**
- A2 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**
- A3 Circulation of Statins and Greenspaces: NL reported that he is still holding about 400 copies. NL to provide each delegate to the International Conference on Human Ecology with a copy and to send 50 copies to AM and PC and 20 copies to GL. GD to send copies to PCTs **A3**
- A4 UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence to *Meanwhile Wildlife Gardens*. NL to obtain quotes for a stainless steel plaque (circa 15cm² with the logo in color) and to liaise with PF **A4**
- A5 Nomination of *Roots and Shoots* for the UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence. NL to chase Mathew Frith for a written report **A5**
- A6 Nomination of Buglife's legal process for UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence. Buglife mounted an unsuccessful legal challenge to development on West Thurrock Marshes because Natural England provided evidence that the site could be developed without

damaging biodiversity. Concern was expressed whether awarding an unsuccessful process might set an unwanted precedence and whether Buglife's application met the criteria for an award. IA to formally write to Natural England for clarification. IA and AM to consider whether Buglife's application meets the Forum's criteria for an award.

A6

- A7 The guidance covering the award process is now on the web site but it needs to be reviewed. GD and NL to undertake a review of the guidance before the next meeting of the Forum. **A7**
- A8 being attended to under Work Programme below.
- A9 and A21 Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land. DG raised felt that the consultation process being undertaken by ADAS lacked context and undertook to send a draft letter expressing his concerns to GD /NL and GD to respond to ADAS on behalf of UK MAB Urban Forum pre 9th June 2009. **A8**
- A10 to A16 being attended to under Conferences
- A17 Work Programme: attended to below.
- A18 Links between the Urban Forum and UK MAB Parent Committee: GD to invite Andy Bell to the next meeting of the Forum to be held in Belfast on 23rd September **A9**
- A19 Done. GD attended the latest UK MAB Committee Meeting. He reported that UNESCO is looking to the UK to lead on urban issues. He also reported that the UNESCO logo is protected under copyright. AB will be attending the next meeting of the parent committee.
- A20 Social Trends. A sub-group of the Forum comprising AB, AM, GLus, PF and NL held a pre-meeting workshop to discuss how social transformation might be of relevance to the Forum. They agreed on a title for this work: *Discover yourself outdoors: new landscapes for a civil society in a changing climate*. The objective is to produce a position statement, in the form of a leaflet, to inform politicians by end September 2009 and in advance of the next general election. The principal aim is to encourage Youth Opportunity Schemes. The sub-group, including GD, will meet again on June 24th in Birmingham to discuss how to take this forward. NL to invite Joanne Tippett (University of Manchester) to attend this meeting **A10**

5. Conferences:

a. Street Trees and Sustainability

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.

It was thus decided to hold the conference in either November 2009 or March 2010. NL to contact UCL regarding room bookings **A11**. PM to invite Jim Smith (Forestry Commission) to address the conference **A12**.

GD to contact the International Society for Arboreal Cultures and the London Tree Officer's Association regarding their participation and to submit a renewed plan to CCW and to approach the International Journal of Urban Forestry regarding publication of the proceedings **A13**

NL to liaise with GD and all Forum members and to coordinate responses **A14**

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 PF undertook to contact GLE and to report progress at the next meeting **A15**

c) Greenspace Toolbox.:

A sub-group of the Forum comprising PF, AB, GLE and NL held a workshop on May 26th and reviewed the Forum's approach to developing a greenspace toolkit in conjunction with CCW. Whilst there are a number of guides and case studies covering a variety of issues such as adaptation to climate change there are no standards for the provision of greenspace to control pollution, combat heat islands or ameliorate urban flooding. Experience from the National Playing Fields Association has shown the power of setting a standard - which is then easily adopted by local authorities. CCW and Natural England adopted a similar standard setting approach for the provision of greenspace for human health and well being and then released a toolkit to help local authorities convert the standard into action. This again proved successful, generating an evidence base which might then be used by local communities and other stakeholders to request action on green spaces in their areas. The sub-group identified topic areas where similar toolkits might be applicable and nominated Forum members to undertake a scoping exercise in advance of the Forum's September 09 meeting. Appendix 1 is PF's summary of the sub-groups meeting. NL to co-ordinate members responses to the coping exercise. **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 July 2nd 10.00 to 16.00 which will be facilitated by PF. GD will also deliver a keynote speech.

e) Shanghai Expo: Following the 3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Madrid, 2008, the UK agreed to help MAB drive forward the 'urban' issues arising from the Madrid Action Plan. In connection with this the MAB Secretariat have contacted the UK MAB Committee and said: "we can try to get 1/2 experts from UK for a meeting in the Shanghai Expo as part of a larger UNESCO-China Forum on "Cultural Heritage and Urban Regeneration". PF undertook to contact the MAB Secretariat to find out what they had in mind for the UK 'experts' to do, and what outcomes they were seeking from the meeting. **A16**.

Details of the Shanghai Expo are at
<http://en.expo2010china.com/index.htm>

6. A Handbook of Urban Ecology

The handbook is being edited by ID and DG. It will be published by Routledge. The Handbook will be a publication of UK MAB Urban Forum and will include the Forum logo. ID to approach Natasha Bevan at UNESCO UK National Commission about publicising the Handbook. **A17**.

7. Web site

The Forum agreed to appoint Graham Bowden (University of Manchester) to redesign and to modernise the web site for a fee of £500.00. The new web site will include a member's discussion area and, initially, both the old and the new web site should run in parallel.

8. Member's affiliation

All members are requested to check their affiliation shown on the Forum's web site and to advise NL of any amendments **A18**.

9. Nominees to the Urban Forum

GD to approach Paul Evans (Guardian Correspondent). **A19**.

NL to approach Joanne Tippett (University of Manchester) **A20**.

10. Work programme

GD, AB and NL met in Manchester on March 24th to review and update the work programme. It was agreed that in future the Secretary would prepare an Annual Report to year ending 31st December by the following 31st January. The Report will comprise:

- Introduction
- Financial Statement
- Work Programme
- Other items, e.g. Awards, etc.

The Forum's funders (CCW, SNH, NIEA and NE) have accepted this reporting procedure.

11. Financial Report

NL reported that the balance at 26th May 2009 stood at £6563.58.00 of which £5512.61.00 is in a deposit account. The Forum's funders, CCW, SNH, NIEA and NE have agreed funds of £1,500 each per annum, subject to their approval of the Annual Report. This figure should provide adequate funds for the Forum to continue its work. GD formally thanked the Funders for their support.

12. Any Other Business

1. PF to come up with a revised description for urban biosphere reserves and to PF to provide a revised description for the work-plan item formerly titled 'Urban Biosphere Reserves' as this term is no longer acceptable to UNESCO MAB **A21**
2. Following the proposal to aim for Biosphere Reserve status for the lower Thames estuary, DG to contact Terry Farrell to enquire further and PF to follow this up **A22**

3. PC to send NL details of a site visit scheduled for September 22nd and a tour AM September 23rd in advance of the Forum meeting in Belfast on September 23rd and NL to circulate Members **A23**
4. NL to invite Stephen Garvin (BRE) to be invited to address the Edinburgh meeting of the Forum in February 2010 on contaminated land **A24**
5. AB to invite John Little and Nigel Dunnett to address the December meeting of Forum on green roofs **A25**

13. Dates of future meetings .

- Wednesday 23rd September 2009 Belfast
- Wednesday 9th December 2009 London, UCL
- Wednesday 24th February 2010 Edinburgh, SNH
- Week commencing 17th May 2010 (exact date to be confirmed) in London, UCL

Appendix 1: Greenspace Toolkits Workshop Notes.