



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Draft Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 11th May 2010 at UCL, London.

1. Present

Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent consultant (Chair)
Ian Angus	(IA)	Scottish Natural Heritage
Ambra Burls	(AB)	Anglia Ruskin University (Deputy Chair)
Peter Cush	(PC)	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Ian Douglas	(ID)	University of Manchester
Mathew Frith	(MF)	London Wildlife Trust
Peter Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales
Philip James	(PJ)	University of Salford
Jane Houghton	(JH)	Natural England
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (Secretary)
Graham Leekes	(GL)	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Judy Ling-Wong	(GLW)	Black Environment Network
Grant Luscombe	(GL)	Landlife
Lyme, Samantha	(SL)	Natural England (by invitation)
Alison Millward	(AM)	Independent Consultant

2. Apologies

David Goode, John Handley, Julie Proctor, Joe Ravetz, Joanne Tippett.

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 (Forum archives): The Forum's archives have now been organised and codified by University of Aberystwyth. The Forum expressed thanks to Dr. Susan Davies and her students at University of Aberystwyth and to AM and PF for having arranged this work. It was suggested that the archives (with the exception of the last 10 years) should be lodged at a university and ID undertook to contact John Ryland Library at University of Manchester **A2**
- A3 Nomination of *Roots and Shoots* for the UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence. JLW undertook to attend to this within the next two months and to liaise with MF. **A3**

- A4 Nomination of Buglife's legal process for UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence. After discussion it was agreed to re-consider the question of an award to Buglife for their work in general in 24 months time. [A4](#)
- A5 Biosphere Reserve status for the Lower Thames Estuary. It was agreed to let this action lapse. A6 Review of the Forum accounts on an annual basis on behalf of the Secretariat: GD undertook to ask Mark Branzky for a quote for this work [A5](#)
- A7 AM/AB and JT to devise an appropriate training module is carried forward [A6](#).
- A8 to A19 are agenda items and are dealt with below

5. Conferences:

a) Do Street Trees have a Future? (formerly Street Trees and Sustainability).

Arrangements have been made to hold this symposium at UCL in London on Wednesday May 12th 2010.

The concern is trees in the urban environment and the purpose of the conference is to change how urban trees are managed. The conference will be controversial and will reflect passion rather than just academic debate. The conference will consider the case for and against street trees and will address issues such as health and well-being, economics, aesthetics, wind throw effects on trees, and insurance. The aim is to change policy and practice.

NL reported that it is anticipated that 58 paying delegates will attend and that this should result in the event breaking even or making a modest profit.

b) Post-URGENT meeting (provisional):

This meeting is intended to stimulate connections between outcomes of the URGENT programme and urban-rural ecosystem services. GLe has material on ecological findings from the URGENT programme that there is synergy with UNESCO's Biosphere Research programme. GLe will take this forward with David Belpy of EPSRC [A7](#)

c) Shanghai Expo:

May 1st to October 31st 2010. The MAB Secretariat has contacted the UK MAB Committee saying that they can try to get 1-2 experts from the UK for a meeting at the Expo as part of a larger UNESCO-China Forum on Cultural Heritage and Urban Regeneration. PF reported that MAB Paris is seeking clarification of the agenda from the Chinese academics. ID advised that he will be visiting China mid August 2010 and that he would, if appropriate, be available to represent the Forum at this meeting and this potential action by ID was accepted with thanks. [A8](#)

6 Presentation by Professor Gerry Metcalf, UK CIP.

Professor Metcalf was regrettably unavailable and his presentation is deferred.

7 Multi-cultural participation

Judy Ling Wong gave a presentation on the significance of a clear positioning in relation to underpinning multicultural participation in the 21st Century. She highlighted the socio-cultural-environmental ethos of the Man and the Biosphere concept and the trend of sustainability encompassing a sustainable environment and sustainable communities. With the rise of a "majority minority" within UK cities from 2010, paying attention to ethnic inclusion is now a mainstream concern. Pro- active

frameworks for working towards full participation by ethnic minorities locally and globally are now on the agenda.

8 Greenspaces Toolbox: A methodology for assessing the extent, the quality and the appropriateness of urban greenspace on a given topic area.

The Forum intends to create "Toolbox" which it intends to fill with "Toolkits"; one of which exists at present (- in two versions the CCW, and the NE Accessible Natural Greenspace Toolkit, developed under contract by John Handley's team at CURE).

The other Toolkits the Forum has decided to develop for the Toolbox will cover: Stress (including noise and light pollution); Street Trees; Air Quality; Heat Islands; Flooding and Urban Water Management. In addition the Forum has decided to include a 'tool' to help potential users justify the time and expense involved in using Toolkits from the Toolbox. This was originally referred to as the 'toolkit justifier' but a more acceptable term is the 'Toolkit Pre-Assessment System'. PF and AB have drafted an outline of the Pre-Assessment System which was circulated for comment in February 2010. They will work to extend this pre-assessment system if no comments are received by end May 2010 [A9](#)

Two sub-groups will investigate how to progress the development of guidance on green infrastructure (AM, IA, AB, JH and SL) and on flood/water (GLE, ID and NL)

[A10](#)

GLE drew attention to the EU FP7 Cooperation Work Programme 2011: Environment (including climate change) ENV.2011.2.1.5-1 'Sustainable and Resilient Green Cities' research call which will be coming out in August 2010 with a November 2010 deadline. He queried whether the Forum could offer support to other parties putting a bid together, perhaps with the agencies (NE, CCW, NIEA and SNH) becoming support partners. GLE to provide a synopsis of his proposal for circulation to members

[A11](#)

9 Forum's involvement with students and student projects.

The involvement with students from the University of Aberystwyth on the Forum's archives has been very successful (see above). The Forum is, in principle, receptive to involvement with students and student projects.

10 A Handbook of Urban Ecology

ID reported that the handbook had now been completed and that 210 pages will be sent to the publisher, Routledge, this month. ID to contact Natasha Bevan regarding endorsement by UNESCO [A12](#).

11 Web site

NL reported that the web site is up to date. He also reported the existence of a rogue Forum site at www.ukmaburbanforum.org. NL to investigate offering to buy this and other potential rogue sites such as .net and .com [A13](#)

12 Membership and membership structure

GL, Forum member since the establishment of the Forum in 1987, tendered his resignation from the Forum. He informed the Forum that now that he is only working part time there are huge demands on his time and that he felt that it was also time to make way for new blood. GL's resignation was accepted with great regret and GD expressed his thanks and appreciation to GL for his outstanding contributions to the success of the Forum.

GL proposed his Landlife colleague Richard Scott for membership of the Forum. Richard Scott's CV was circulated to members and his application to join the Forum was accepted unanimously.

JH introduced Samantha Lyme, Senior Specialist for urban biodiversity at Natural England, who had applied to join the Forum. SL outlined her experience and reasons for applying to join the Forum and then withdrew from the meeting. Members unanimously accepted her application.

NL to write to both new members formally welcoming them to the Forum **A14**
PF's proposals for a review of the Forum's membership structure to ensure that the Forum remains a centre of excellence and at the forefront of integrated thinking on urban environmentalism had been circulated to members. Three categories of Forum membership are proposed:

- Members recruited for a 5 year fixed term who would be expected to take an active part in the Forum's work during that period.
- Fellows selected from the membership past and present for their outstanding contribution to the work of the Forum.
- Representatives nominated by the organisations funding the Forum who would have the status of 'Member' but would serve for as long as their organisation continued to fund the Forum. This category could also include invited representatives from non-funding organisations.

Representatives would also be eligible for selection to Fellowship.

PJ proposed the formation of a Membership Committee to meet once per annum to consider the election of Fellows and other membership issues. It was agreed that this sub-committee should be formed and that it should comprise of GD, AB, PJ and NL and that it should report on its initial deliberations to the next meeting of the Forum

A15

13 Review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network- involvement by the Forum.

It was agreed that the Forum should, if asked, respond in respect of urban sites. NL to distribute copies of 'Discover Yourself Outside' to members of the review team. **A16**

14 Awards

This item was discussed under matters arising- see above.

15 Work programme and annual report: Secretary

NL distributed copies of the Annual Report for 2009/10 and the provisional work programme for 2010/2011. After discussion it was agreed that PF and NL should meet later in May 2010 to reconsider the format for the work programme **A17**

16 Financial Report

NL presented the financial statement as at 5th April 2010 which showed a net current balance of funds (reserves) of £3,757. NL also presented a budget for 2010-2011 based on an income from the funding agencies of £ 4,000 for the period. NL pointed out that assuming that the reserves are allocated to fund specific Forum projects such as 'Discover Yourself Outside' and the planned toolbox, annual income of £4,000 will require a reduction in funding to the secretariat from £2,400 p.a. to £1,500 p.a. and reducing the regular meetings of the Forum from four to three per annum.

PF commented on the particular importance of the Forum's work at the present time but that due to financial restrictions, the contribution from CCW is unlikely to exceed £500 per annum during the next three years. PF advised that he was investigating potential alternative additional sources of funding for the Forum **A18**

JH advised that she was investigating NE funding for specific Forum projects **A19**

IA advised that he would seek to secure training event funding from SNH for the planned meeting of Forum in Edinburgh in September 2010. **A20**

AB drew the Forum's attention to the EC's LIFE Plus funding scheme which potentially covers match funding to NGOs undertaking the type of activities undertaken by the Forum. The deadline for the 2010 call for applications is 1st September 2010. AB undertook to try to obtain some guidance from UK MAB on how best to apply to this fund and to liaise with GD and NL about making an application. **A21**

17 Any other business

No other business was raised.

18 Dates of future meetings.

- o Wednesday 22nd September 2010 Edinburgh, SNH