

**Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at NE,  
London.**

**1. Present**

|                |       |                                      |
|----------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| Gerald Dawe    | (GD)  | Independent consultant               |
| Ian Douglas    | (ID)  | University of Manchester (Chair)     |
| Mathew Frith   | (MF)  | London Wildlife Trust                |
| Peter Frost    | (PF)  | Countryside Council for Wales        |
| David Goode    | (DG)  | University College, London           |
| Jane Houghton  | (JH)  | Natural England                      |
| Nigel Lawson   | (NL)  | University of Manchester (Secretary) |
| Graham Leeks   | (GL)  | CEH                                  |
| Richard Scott  | (RS)  | Landlife                             |
| Joanne Tippett | (JT)  | University of Manchester             |
| Judy Ling Wong | (JLW) | Black Environment Network            |

**Participation by telephone link**

|                 |      |                        |
|-----------------|------|------------------------|
| Philip James    | (PJ) | University of Salford  |
| Samantha Lyme   | (SL) | Natural England        |
| Alison Millward | (AM) | Independent Consultant |

**2. Apologies**

John Box, Ambra Burls, John Handley, Peter Massini, Julie Proctor, Joe Ravetz, Peter Shirley.

**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 Forum archives: NL pointed out that they are currently stored in his garage and thus both 'in the way' and not particularly secure. They should, if possible, (with the exception of the last 10 years), be lodged at a suitable university or other appropriate institution. ID undertook to contact John Ryland Library at University of Manchester. DG undertook to pursue possible inclusion of the archives in a proposed urban ecology collection in the library retention of the Linnean Society **A2**
- A3 Nomination of *Roots and Shoots* for the UK MAB Urban Forum Award: agenda item dealt with below.

- A4 Nomination of Buglife’s legal process for UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence. Buglife have again expressed a desire to be considered for this award and ID undertook to respond to them. AM has sent ID the e-mail concerning progress so far. **A3**
- A5 News is awaited from UNESCO on the the proposal to aim for Biosphere reserve Status for the Lower Thames Estuary. JH to follow this up **A4**
- A6 Review of the Forum accounts on an annual basis on behalf of the Secretariat: ID to investigate. **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. Future of UK MAB Urban Forum**

ID had previously circulated a document to members outlining his vision of the direction of the Forum and possible future options for the Forum following the drastic reduction in funding to the Forum by the four traditional funding agencies (CCW, NE, SNH and NIEA).

He reiterated the original mission of the Forum, e.g. to:

- raise awareness;
- stimulate research;
- influence policy;
- improve the design and management of urban systems;
- push urban nature up the social and political agenda.

ID then outlined the arguments for and against each alternative future option for the Forum:

| <b>Option</b>                            | <b>For</b>  | <b>Against</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| 1 To continue as we are, e.g. status quo | Ability to work as widely as present;   | Liability of members<br>Lack of funding for secretariat   |
| 2 become a charity                       | Limited liability<br>Access to charity benefits, including access to grants<br>Freedom to set own terms of reference, aims and objectives   | Reporting and legal requirements<br>Trustee formalities and responsibilities<br>Would search for funds change nature of the Forum?  |
| 3 merge with related charity             | Avoids establishment procedures<br>Economies of scale<br>Better recognition of the urban wildlife and ecology issues by people externally.<br>Many charities operate separate activities under one organisation | Possible clash of objectives<br>Difficulty of maintaining separate identity   |
| 4 no-budget organisation                 | Saves financial worry<br>Can be highly flexible<br>Uses low cost internet facilities effectively<br>Known to be widely used in scientific circles and can be highly successful                                  | Assumes the four countries can continue to provide support in kind;<br>Over reliance on members goodwill and that of some of their institutions;<br>Has to be driven by members enthusiasm<br>Secretariat would have to be voluntary<br>Technology not always perfect |

Following discussion it was unanimously agreed that the Forum should continue to operate as at present and retain its status as an unincorporated think tank; to be of support to the agencies and with the agencies providing whatever financial or in-kind

assistance they are able in the current financial climate; and with the secretariat being run on a voluntary basis by members.

NL pointed out that the Forum currently has cash reserves in excess of outstanding liabilities of approximately £3,500. PF confirmed that CCW were still committed to provide the Forum with £500 per annum for 2011/12 and 2012/13. NL indicated his preparedness for the time being, to continue his current secretarial duties, with some assistance from other members. He was thanked for agreeing to do this on an honorary basis for the time being.

Discussion also focused on the role of the Forum, its mission and its future remit. ID undertook, in the light of this discussion, to clarify the Forum's aims and objectives **A6**.

## **6. Conferences:**

### **Post-URGENT meeting:**

GL reported that he had spoken to David Belpy of EPSRC and that the feeling is that the URGENT programme is now in the past and that we should look at other potential vehicles. GL reported on the Research Council's current position and felt that the Forum could potentially apply to ESRCs Knowledge Exchange Scheme for funding for a specific project.

## **7 Shanghai Expo:**

ID attended the Symposium on Urban Futures in Shanghai in October 2010 at the invitation of SCOPE, CAS and UNESCO, with the latter paying his costs. The declaration of the International Symposium on Urban Futures and Human and Ecosystem Wellbeing is appended to these minutes (Appendix 1). SCOPE and UNESCO are developing a new project primarily concerned with urban areas of less than 1 million people, which is initially being drafted by ID and Rusong Wang of CAS. While much attention is now focused on environmental issues surrounding emerging mega-cities; the environmental wellbeing and the provision of adequate environmental services in small/medium cities of less than 1 million inhabitants is now being recognised as an emerging issue. ID undertook to prepare a briefing document on this topic including how the Forum might be able to respond. **A7**

## **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 a "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.

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

PF and AB will be meeting to finalise the Toolkit Pre-assessment System. **A8**

PF suggested that the University of Manchester's Sustainable Cities: Options for Responding to Climate Change Impacts and Outcomes (SCORCHIO) research programme might be adaptable by the Forum into a user-friendly toolkit and that the Forum might potentially look for funding under the ESRC Knowledge Exchange

Scheme for this work. NL undertook to investigate this further with John Handley and other members of the SCORCHIO consortium. **A9**  
GL undertook to liaise with NL and ID regarding the Flooding and Water management section **A10**.

## **9 All-Party Parliamentary Groups**

PF proposed that the Forum establish communication with All-Party Parliamentary groups interested in urban green-space. It was agreed that the best approach will be to target key groups with details of the Forum's outputs such as Discover Yourself Outside or the Handbook on Urban Ecology and to offer comment and/or presentations on specific issues. NL/ ID to write to all secretaries of key groups to raise awareness of the Forum's work and that all Forum members should consider how and where to make an intervention **A11**.

ID will approach the Co-op Bank regarding a reprint of Discover Yourself Outside **A12**.

## **10 A Handbook on Urban Ecology:**

ID reported that the Handbook on Urban Ecology was published by Routledge on December 20<sup>th</sup> and that the Forum has been duly credited. The Forum formally thanked ID and co-editor DG for their hard work in making this happen. ID also informed the Forum that the publishers, Taylor and Francis have asked ID about a Textbook on Urban Ecology. ID and PJ are discussing this.

AM pointed out that publication of this handbook is a significant achievement for the Forum and that ways should be found to ensure that it receives due notice and that the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) in November 2011 presents an opportunity **A13**. Colleagues emphasised that the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) was an appropriate body in which to promote the book. It is also holding a conference on 23 March 2011 in London on – *Invasive Species: New Natives in a Changing Climate?*

DG reported that he will be attending the Ecobuild Conference at ExCel in London on 1<sup>st</sup>-3rd March 2011 and will be using this opportunity to publicise the Handbook **A14**.

## **11 New scientific outputs by the Forum**

ID suggested that the Forum should consider having a presence at events such as the 2012 Eco Summit in the US and at selected Local Authority and Ecological Society meetings. The Forum could also hold its own annual or bi-annual conference on urban ecology. **A15**

MF reported that London Wildlife Trust will be seeking to mark its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a seminar, probably in October 2011, to consider what has happened over the last 30 years and what might happen over the coming 30 years and that the Trust would be seeking partners. He also informed members of a planned week-end "Wildlife Expo" event at Alexander Palace. MF and ID to liaise on how the Forum might collaborate with London Wildlife Trust in these events **A16**.

NL reported that John Handley would be prepared to work on a balanced response by the Forum to the government's plans to sell of the Forestry Commission. It was agreed that this should be done as soon as possible. PJ and AM both agreed to also be involved **A17**

John Handley also requested that his involvement with environmental consultant Genecon's programme on the estimation of the monetary value of Green Infrastructure be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Forum. **A18**

## **12 Membership**

Mr. Terry Robinson, currently Head of People, Engagement, Outreach and Access at Natural England had made an application to become a member of the Forum. His application was accepted unanimously. NL to send a letter of acceptance to Terry Robinson and to point out the criteria for membership and fellowship of the Forum **A19**.

## **13 Awards**

JLW informed members about her review of *Roots and Shoots* nomination for the UK MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence. It was agreed unanimously to present *Roots and Shoots* with the UK MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence. JLW and NL to organise a plaque and award certificate **A20**.

NL reported that assessment of Wigan Greenheart Regional Park and re-assessment of Chorlton Water Park for the UK-MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence was being progressed by NL. JH and ID **A21**.

## **14 Natural Environment White Paper- Ministerial Advisory Panel Visit to AGMA**

NL reported that, due to intervention by Richard Sharland, he had attended the visit of the Natural Environment White Paper Ministerial Advisory Panel to the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and Trafford MBC. The AGMA Environment Commission's made extensive use of the Forum's response to Defra in its briefing note for Defra.

## **15 Web site**

NL reported that the web site is up to date. He also reported that the Secretariat had been sub-contracting the maintenance of the web site to Graham Bowden of University of Manchester. It was agreed that £200 per annum would be ring-fenced to ensure continuation of this arrangement.

## **16 Work Programme**

NL reported that the 2010/11 work programme and annual report will be prepared after the Forum's year end on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011, subject to confirmation that this is the date by which it is required by CCW. PF proposed that it include an estimate of the monetary value of Member's time devoted to the Forum. AM advised that a rate of £400 per day is appropriate. It was agreed that all members should keep a record of time spent on Forum matters and report it to NL quarterly **A22**.

## **17 Funding Options**

This item was dealt with under item 5 above.

## **18 Financial Report**

This item was dealt with under item 5 above.

## **19 Any other business**

There was no other business.

## 20 Dates of future meetings.

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at either Atkins in Birmingham or at NE in London, (venue to be confirmed).

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September should be noted provisionally as a possible date for a further meeting, on the afternoon of a training event being planned by NE in London. Members will also be able to participate in the training event visits on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September. (*Dates still to be confirmed*).

## Appendix 1

### **Shanghai Declaration on Urban Futures and Human and Ecosystem Wellbeing**

We, the participants to the International Symposium on “Urban Futures and Human and Ecosystem Wellbeing” held in Shanghai, People's Republic of China, 26-30 October 2010,

Recognizing cities as engines of economic development and wealth in the past and in today's urbanizing world and recognizing their immense potential in the future to contribute to human and social welfare and the diversity of cultural expressions, tangible and intangible heritage, as well as to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity,

Concerned by the impacts of rapid urbanization, unsustainable development and the excessive consumption of resources of cities on the ecological wellbeing of the larger region, including effects on biodiversity, ecosystems, natural resources, climate, human health, and cultural heritage,

Confident that cities and conurbations can significantly reduce their ecological footprints and that they can become engines of innovation for green, climate-friendly economies, promote climate sensitive development, demonstrate energy efficiency, and advance the use of non-fossil sources of energy, good management of natural resources, and adaptation strategies to manage the impacts of climate change, and be safeguards for cultural creativity, diversity and human and ecosystem wellbeing,

Appreciating the focus of the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China, on the theme "Better City, Better Life" that promoted a rich exchange of experiences of urban development and explorations of future urban habitats, lifestyles, consumption and production patterns, and governance around the world,

Expressing gratitude to the Shanghai Advanced Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS-SARI), the Shanghai Branch of the Chinese Academy of Science and the City of Shanghai for the organization of the International Symposium on “Urban Futures and Human and Ecosystem Wellbeing”,

Welcoming the objective of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) to build on the inspiration and outcomes of the

World Expo 2010 in Shanghai and of this symposium to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among researchers and practitioners so as to promote a positive relationship between cities and the ecosystems of which they are a part, and to set cities on trajectories of sustainability that are energy and resource-efficient, low emission, promoters of social and economic enterprise, expressions of human creativity and cultural diversity and human wellbeing,

Recognizing that the UNESCO MAB biosphere reserves provide ecosystem services for human wellbeing and can also function as learning sites at local and regional levels to promote and enhance cooperation between the cities and the regions in which they are located,

Convinced of the need to further strengthen and support interdisciplinary and international cooperation on sustainable urban development in existing, new, and rapidly expanding cities,

- Encourage UNESCO MAB, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) to establish a joint policy relevant, research, assessment, capacity building and outreach programme to further advance the concept of sustainable urban development;
- Invite regional, national, state or provincial, and local authorities, experts and other stakeholders to promote sustainable urban futures through the UNESCO MAB, CAS and SCOPE joint programme founded on integrated approaches that consider *inter alia* local knowledge, conservation and sustainable use of urban, rural and natural systems;
- Encourage all relevant stakeholders to take the cultural heritage dimension into due consideration, including UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscapes approach and, as appropriate, the proposed UNESCO Recommendation on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes that seeks to integrate the aims of urban heritage conservation with the goals of sustainable social and economic development;
- Urge regional, national, state or provincial, and local authorities to help address climate change, environment and pollution issues, including light pollution, through a range of resource use efficiency programmes and renewable energy production and to allocate sufficient resources to achieve the objectives of economically sustainable and environmentally sound urban development;
- Call upon the international, national, regional and local communities to make full use of UNESCO MAB biosphere reserves to enhance urban sustainability and to improve the relationships between cities and the ecosystems of which they are a part;
- Emphasize the need for raised awareness throughout civil society of the consequences of choices in lifestyle and in the design and management of the built environment and for new models of urban development that promote ecosystem and human wellbeing;

- Call on governments at all levels to integrate the safeguarding and further expansion of ecosystems in urban planning and design interventions, including enhanced provision of multi-functional green and blue areas;
- Welcome collaboration, networking and partnerships in the context of the joint programme with other relevant organisations, institutions and initiatives, as well as with urban stakeholders around the world to advance sustainable urban development and its social, cultural, scientific and technological dimensions.

23 November 2010