



## The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

### **Draft Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at Roots and Shoots, London.**

#### **1. Present**

Mathew Frith	(MF)	London Wildlife Trust
Jane Houghton	(JH)	Natural England
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (Secretary)
Samantha Lyme	(SL)	Natural England
Alison Millward	(AM)	Independent Consultant (Acting Chair)
Alan Scott	(AS)	Independent Consultant
Peter Shirley.	(PS)	Forum Fellow
Peter Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales

#### **2. Apologies**

John Box, Ambra Burls, Peter Cush, Ian Douglas, John Handley, Philip James, Julie Proctor, Joe Ravetz, Terry Robinson, Richard Scott, Joanne Tippett, Judy Ling Wong. ID's absence was due to his involvement in a motoring accident which resulted in him breaking his arm and members wished him a full and speedy recovery.

#### **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: All members are reminded to send appropriate publications for inclusion on the Forum's web site to NL. **A1**
- A2 Forum archives: NL pointed out that they are currently stored in his garage which means that they are both insecure and relatively inaccessible. Option 1 for their longer term storage is inclusion in a proposed urban ecology collection in the library retention of the Linnean Society and NL will contact David Goode **A2** A second potential option to be investigated by JH is storage in Natural England's File Archive **A3** Failing both these options AM offered storage in her loft space until a more appropriate location is secured.
- A3 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. ID to respond to them. AM has sent ID the e-mail concerning progress so far. **A4**
- A4 News is awaited from UNESCO on the proposal to aim for Biosphere reserve Status for the Lower Thames Estuary. JH to follow this up **A5** MF reported that the application by Brighton for Biosphere Reserve status was

proceeding and undertook to approach Richard Howarth with regard to Brighton and Hove Council hosting a meeting of the Forum **A6**

- A5 Review of the Forum accounts on an annual basis on behalf of the Secretariat: ID and other members are urged to identify a suitable auditor. **A7**
- A6 SCOPE/UNESCO project on urban areas of less than 1 million people: ID is awaiting news from SCOPE, UNESCO and the Chinese Academy of Science's Experts Group and will thereafter develop a framework on the topic on how the Forum might respond and be involved. This item is carried forward **A8**
- A7 ID's approach to the Co-op Bank for funds for a reprint of Discover Yourself Outside was unsuccessful.
- A8. MF reported that due to lack of funds London Wildlife Trust's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary programme is being pushed back.
- A9. Offer by PS to prepare a short summary of EPSRC's Sustainable Urban Environments (SUE) programme for the Forum is carried forward. **A9**
- A10 to A23 are agenda items and are dealt with below.

**5. Greenspace Toolkits: A methodology for assessing the extent, the quality and the appropriateness of urban greenspace on a given topic area. *Think Lab to explore the current options for measuring the provision of ecosystem services in towns and cities to be held at University of Salford 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011***

NL reported that Stephan Pauleit (Munich Technical University) and Dagmar Haase (Humbolt University, Berlin) have accepted ID's invitation to attend but that Thomas Elmqvist (Stockholm Resilience Centre) was unavailable for this meeting but had requested to be involved in the future. MF reported that he would be addressing the Green Infrastructure Partnership and would approach Paul Lincoln and JH will approach Ingo Schüder who has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for GI delivery projects. **A10**

**6. Conferences:**

**A. Urban Greenspace Toolkits. *1 day conference/workshop proposed for April 2012***  
This is incorporated in to Agenda item 5 above.

**B. Urban Greening and Future Water for Towns and Cities. *Possibility of the Forum holding a conference and workshop on this topic under the UNESCO label***

Members responded positively to this proposal. In discussion AM stressed the need to be aware of other events of this nature which might be taking place, in particular by organisations such as CIRIA and SEPA. PF undertook to provide a link to the Welsh SUDS working party **A11** and JH to both the Environment Agency and to Natural England's water specialists. **A12** SL undertook to talk to Natural England's eco systems experts and to investigate the possibility of taking this forward at a workshop to be chaired by NE at Ecobuild in March 2012. **A13**

It was agreed to hold a scoping meeting of interested members in advance of the next full meeting of the Forum on January 18<sup>th</sup> at University of Manchester at 10.30am and PF, SL, AS, JH and PS indicated their willingness to attend. **A14**

**7. All-Party Parliamentary Groups possibly interested in urban green space- *potential for the Forum to establish communication with relevant groups.***

NL reported that only two groups had so far acknowledged receipt of ID's letter and the Forum's brochure. Members expressed the need to adopt a more strategic approach to how the Forum might interact with MPs and MF undertook to consider how best to take this forward. [A15](#)

**8. Response to the Defra Independent Panel on Forestry in England and proposed "City people and their forests and woodlands".**

A response to the Independent Panel was submitted at the end of July. A formal acknowledgement was received. A copy of the response is appended to these minutes. No further progress has been made with the proposed leaflet.

PF drew attention to CIRIA's Large Trees in the Urban Environment Design and Management Guide (RP939) Project Report expected in early 2012.

AM undertook to circulate the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust's report [A16](#)

**9. Response by the Forum to the Planning Framework consultation process.**

MF informed the Forum that London Wildlife Trust has responded at length and undertook to provide input into a response by the Forum to be formulated by ID and NL. A copy of the Chairman's response, which MF initiated but which included inputs from many Forum members, is attached to these minutes.

**10. Training Sessions for RTPI.**

AM undertook to investigate possibilities with RTPI. [A17](#)

**11. 'Green Veins' linking the arts with urban greenspace issues.**

AM reported that Celia Spouncer, Artist in Residence- School of Art and Design University of Ulster, Belfast, has accepted her invitation to give a presentation to the Forum at its next meeting scheduled to be held at University of Manchester on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2012. PJ to confirm whether or not Kerry Morison is also able to attend. [A18](#)

**12. Membership**

NL and PJ to undertake an annual review of member's status against the membership criteria [A19](#)

Members are urged to consider potential new members, and in particular specialists in climate change in urban environments, spatial planning and economic evaluation. It was agreed that the procedure to be followed is for current members to provide a brief pen portrait of potential candidates to the next meeting of the Forum when their suitability would be considered. ALL [A20](#)

**13. Awards**

- Wigan Greenheart: NI/ID to check progress [A21](#)
- Leicester's Eco House: PS agreed to assess [A22](#)
- Black Country Living Landscapes Community Involvement Programme (Contact: Mark Dixon). AM to provide NL with background material and NL to approach John Box to assess. [A23](#) AM and PS declared a conflict of interest in this proposal.
- Other potential site:
  - o Brighton White Walks
  - o London Rivers Action Plan

○ Clapton Park  
were suggested as potential sites warranting the Award and MF undertook to provide information on them prior to the next meeting. **A24**

**14. Work programme and annual report**

NL reported that the work programme for 2011/12 was on schedule. He undertook to provide each meeting with an update on progress on each item in the work programme and on new items added at the commencement of the meeting. **A25**

**15. Funding Options**

No new funding options were identified.

**16. Financial report: Secretary**

NL reported that the current bank balance (reserves) after payment of outstanding liabilities is £3,387. The only current income is £500 per annum from Countryside Council for Wales but that thanks to Natural England's support in hosting meetings in London this income appears to be covering general expenses for the planned three meetings per annum but that any extraneous items such as the December 18<sup>th</sup> workshop in Salford will inevitably reduce the reserves. The meeting expressed its thanks to Natural England and to Countryside Council for Wales for their imperative support.

**17. Any Other Business**

MF reported that the Centenary of the Wildlife Trusts is shortly to be published.

**18. Dates of future meetings**

Wednesday January 18<sup>th</sup> at University of Manchester