



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Draft minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 17th October 2012 at Natural England, London.

1. Present

Ambra Burls	(AB)	Bangor University (Vice Chair)
Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent Consultant
Ian Douglas	(ID)	University of Manchester (Outgoing Chair)
Mathew Frith	(MF)	London Wildlife Trust
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (Outgoing Secretary)
Alison Millward	(AM)	Independent Consultant (Incoming Chair)
Jane Houghton	(JH)	Natural England
Terry Robinson	(TR)	Independent Consultant
Alan Scott	(AS)	Independent Consultant
Judy Ling Wong	(JLW)	Black Environment Network
Chris Nevin	(CN)	Scottish National Heritage (by teleconference link)

2. Apologies

John Box, Peter Cush, Pete Frost, David Goode, John Handley, Philip James, Peter Massini, Samantha Lyme, Peter Shirley, Joe Ravetz.

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 the Secretariat. **A1**
- A2 Biosphere Reserve Status for the Lower Thames Estuary: JH and PM will be meeting with them and will set milestones for actions required for the granting of the MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence **A2**.
- A3 The application by Brighton and Hove for Biosphere reserve status is proceeding and an approach to Brighton and Hove Council to host a meeting of the Forum is being taken forward by MF **A3**
- A4 The Forum's accounts have been audited up to and including 31st July 2012.
- A5 Consideration on how to react to the poor response to the circular to the All Party Parliamentary Groups possibly interested in urban greenspace is being taken forward by MF **A4**
- A6 Training Sessions for RTPI. SL and AM are taking this forward **A5**
- A8 and A9 are agenda items and are dealt with below
- A9 AM and SL are involved with Defra's People Engagement Group and AM will distribute organisational details and thoughts on how the Forum could contribute to this initiative **A6**

- A10 Defra Green Infrastructure Partnership: ID will consider what further action should be taken by the Forum
- A11 to A19 are agenda items and are dealt with below
- A20 Members records of time spent on Forum business has been dropped
- A21 has been done.

5a Greenspace Toolkits

ID raised the need for giving consideration to the potential audience for and users of greenspace toolkits, e.g. at whom are we directing them? Who is the actual user? What are the user's needs? Following discussion it was felt that key audiences would include organisations such as Defra, LAs, NE and community groups and that a useful way forward would be for PF to consult with David Fanaroff of NE Leeds.

ID also reported on the meeting he and NL had had with Kirsty Rhind of Greenspace North West and of the work on toolkits actively being undertaken by Greenspace North West and also by Mersey Forest. It was agreed that in advance of the next meeting of the Forum ID and NL would look into organising a local workshop in the North West to which all Forum members would be invited. **A7**

5b Passing Through: Urban Greening and Future Water for Town and Cities

ID undertook consider further on how best to take this topic forward and to report at the next meeting of the Forum **A8**.

6. Ecosystems Knowledge Network

ID will be contacting them with regard to their possible interest in the Forum's Greenspace Toolkits and Urban Greening and Future Water for Towns and Cities projects. **A9**

7. Possible UK UNESCO MAB Urban Forum/UK SCOPE Urban futures project (Brighton, Bristol, Leicester, Bradford).

Andrew Bell who is on the MAB Committee has expressed interest and ID will take this forward **A10**

8. Possible workshop in collaboration with GreenSpace North West to share experience in urban greenspace valuation and its use in water management.

This item was dealt with under 5a above.

9. Induction of the new Chair of the Forum

ID congratulated AM on being elected Chair of UK MAB Urban Forum and formally handed over the Chair to her. AM then thanked ID for all his work for the Forum. AM also thanked NL who was standing down as Honorary Secretary following this meeting. AM then introduced her draft strategy 2013-2015 which is attached to the minutes.

- AB and JLW, both of whom had been candidates in the election for the Chair, were appointed Vice Chairs
- AM will be the first point of contact with the Forum and will be assisted by the Vice Chairs in maintaining the core and the day to day business of the Forum
- AM reported that Peter Shirley had agreed to maintain the Forum's accounts and to be responsible maintaining for the Forum's web site and NL undertook to meet with him as soon as possible to arrange a smooth handover of these functions **A11**
- AM reported that it was suggested that a Coordinator/motivator should be nominated to 'chivvy' the Forum to keep on route with the Work Plan

- AM invited discussion on her list of opportunities to develop new work. It was agreed that the list, which will provide the agenda for the Forum for the next 2-3 years, would be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Forum and that all members are invited to add to the list, to comment on it, and to identify other areas in which the Forum should also engage.
- Other suggestions from members were that the Forum should:
 - be ‘over-ambitious’ about the health agenda (TR)
 - emphatically network to encourage wildlife fora to embrace urban living/wild landscapes (GD supported by MF and AS) and encourage making green space a common feature in urban management (TR) by writing a position paper as guidance for stakeholders/planners (ID & MF)
 - support ethnic minorities networks through ‘in-reach’ activities, providing expertise where they face impasses in the work they wish to achieve (JLW)
 - support the natural childhood/risky play agenda (JH)
 - strengthen representation at EuroMab and links with other urban green spaces networks across Europe (AB & AM)
 - examine the impacts on policy deriving from the new Wales single agency, new policy frameworks in Scotland and seek an update from NIEA (all).

It was also agreed that each item would be headed by a ‘champion’ who would ensure that the topic is duly addressed and actioned by the Forum. The initial champions are listed hereunder in brackets and all initial champions emphasised that they would welcome joint championship with members of the Forum who were not able to attend this meeting:

- Art and the environment conference - inspiration and public participation- (Judy Ling Wong)
- Urban biosphere in UK - building on increasing recognition re NIA, LNP, River Basin Catchment Plans, Green Infrastructure and other landscape scale initiatives - Brighton, Birmingham & Black Country, Brighton.... (Jane Houghton)
- Strengthening links with key UK policy bodies e.g. Defra's UK Biodiversity Steering Group (Terry Robinson)
- Promoting pro-environmental behaviour change (Alison Millward and Ambra Burls)
- Promoting the human health and well-being/ ‘green health literacy’ agenda (Ambra Burls)
- Strengthening links with the health and well-being agenda (Ambra Burls)
- Urban GreenSpace Valuation with Greenspace North West (Ian Douglas and Nigel Lawson)
- Strengthening links with more international bodies eg WCPA of IUCN (Ian Douglas and Judy Ling Wong)
- Strengthening links with potential UK biosphere reserves e.g. Lower Thames Estuary, Brighton (Jane Houghton)
- Natural childhood/risky play agenda (Judy Ling Wong)
- Commenting on impacts of NEWP, LNPS, NIAs, Biodiversity 2020, Forestry Strategy, National Planning Policy Framework, Recession (Terry Robinson).

- Maintaining regular contact with and further support for past Award winners (Judy Ling Wong)
- Identifying which other bodies the Forum would like to contribute to (Alison Millward)
- Promoting the expansion of friends of groups for natural urban greenspace.(Chris Nevin)

All members of the Forum are encouraged to engage in this process by attending the next meeting of the Forum or via communication with the Chair, Vice Chairs or champions. **A12**

10. Membership

Celia Spouncer, David Haley and Kerry Robinson were unanimously invited to become Members of UK MAB Urban Forum and NL was requested to write to them accordingly **A13**

Discussion again focused on the need to widen the scope of the membership, to think about the structure of the membership, the gender balance, the need to attract young and upcoming people. Members of Urban Wildlife Network and also architects and urban planners should be targeted. **A14**

It was also agreed that candidates for members of the Forum should be proposed and seconded by an existing member and that the candidate provides all members with his/her CV along with a statement outlining the reason for wishing to join the Forum and what he/she can bring to the Forum. Thereafter the candidature should be put to members at a usual meeting of the Forum for their formal approval. It was again emphasised that membership of the Forum should include taking an active and a participatory role in the Forum's agenda. It was also agreed that this criteria for membership should be added to the Forum's web site. **A15**

11. Use of the Forum's Logo

Award winners do not have the automatic right to use the Forum's logo. AB and JLW undertook to develop a protocol for the use of the Forum's logo and that this will be published on the Forum's web site **A16**.

12. Awards

- Wigan Greenheart: ID reported that he had been in contact with Mark Champion and that he was taking this forward. **A17**
- Investigation of the regeneration programmes in St. Helen's towards potential recognition by the Forum by JHan is pending **A18**
- Gordon Square (University of London) is being progressed by AS meeting 26th October **A19**
- Bankside Open Spaces Trust AM and SL meeting with them on 14th Nov. **A20**
- Olympic Park: AS and MF agreed to arrange to monitor progress over the next 2-3 years in respect of ecology, biodiversity and also the Park's usage by the local community and the general public. AB to contact Nigel Dunnett to seek a post-games update **A21**

Members discussed support for past Award winners: general discussion took place on how to systematise the awards, support and sustainably monitor the outcomes for awardees (funding, good practice, networking, impact assessments, training), review and renew nominations on a regular basis, provide a networking tool i.e. a

newsletter to share good practice and innovation/sustainable framework. AS and MF have agreed to put together a proposal for this.

13. Secretariat

This has been dealt with in point 9 above.

14. Work programme and annual report

This also dealt with in point 9 above. The work programme will be updated during the next meeting of the Forum.

15 Financial report: Secretary

NL reported that the current bank balance (reserves) after payment of outstanding liabilities at 15th October 2012 £6,278. NL estimated that current general annual expenditure is running at £1,500- £1,800 per annum. CN reported that the Interagency Cooperation (NE, CCW, SNH and NIEA) were going to be able to contribute £300 in the current financial year and JH reported that NE would be making a one off contribution of £500. JH also reported that Peter Cush was trying to obtain some additional funding from NIEA. On behalf of the Forum AM and NL thanked all members of the Interagency Cooperation for their financial support and support in kind in hosting meetings of the Forum, particularly when bearing in mind the current financial climate.

16 Any Other Business

1. JH and MF intend to attend the Ecosystems Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) research theme development workshop for the ESPA 2013 funding call to jump start the framing of the research themes workshop on 21st November 2012 on behalf of Forum
2. AB and TR to monitor Well Being and Sustainable Development and outcomes of a conference on this subject on October 24th 2012 (at University of West of England, Bristol).
3. JLW draw attention to the National Lottery Evaluation Report of the Local Food Programme which has attracted £59 million of funding and created an increased demand for locally grown food, impacted on communities, created social cohesion and participation. MF drew attention to potential unintended consequences for nature and wild life.
4. MF drew attention to the Integrated Habitats Design Competition which champions working with nature and natural systems; the Green Infrastructure Partnership Awards and the Cities and Biodiversity Outlook Global Launch Event on October 15th 2012 at the Cities for Life Summit in Hyderabad. The “Cities and Biodiversity Outlook” (CBO) will consist of a global assessment of the links between urbanization, biodiversity and ecosystem services. Combining science and policy, scientists from around the world will analyze how urbanization and urban growth impacts biodiversity and ecosystems, delivering key messages on the conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources to decision-makers.
5. AM and NL had a meeting on October 17th with the Prince’s Foundation in which they discussed potential collaboration between the Forum and the Prince’s Foundation who’s goal is a future where all of us can take part in making our communities more sustainable.
6. ID reported on his meeting with personnel from the Toronto Metropolitan Parks who suggested that too much emphasis is put on biodiversity and the protection of

rare species at the expense of concentration on the amounts and the protection of known local species and in providing access to them.

17. Dates of future meetings

- 8th February 2013 at FC/SNH in Edinburgh with optional overnight stay and site visit on morning of 9th Feb.
- 12th June 2013 at NE in London (room 2 on 7th Floor has already been kindly booked by JH).
- September 2013 at NIEA in Belfast (precise date still to be arranged) in conjunction with an interagency training event