

The UK-MAB Urban Forum

www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk

(Provisional) Work Programme 2008/09



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THE UK-MAB URBAN FORUM

The Urban Forum of the UK Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee is a network of specialists, practitioners and thinkers involved with nature conservation in urban areas. Its mission is to raise awareness, stimulate research, influence policy, improve the design and management of urban systems, and push urban biodiversity and nature conservation up the social and political agenda. Its distinctive contribution to this goal is integrated thinking. The Urban Forum tries to reflect and express these specialisms, and the many complex realities they represent. In the breadth of its agenda and the range of its membership, it is unique within the UK.

Members of the Urban Forum come from a wide variety of backgrounds from voluntary organisations to local authorities, government agencies and the private sector: from those primarily concerned with conserving “nature” – plants, wildlife, biodiversity – to those, researchers and practitioners, who work with people and deal with the human use of green space. Currently there are some 24 members who collectively contribute to the continuing reputation of the UK as a centre of excellence in this field. The networking and multi-disciplinary approach which is the hallmark of the Urban Forum is a source of new insights whose promulgation to a wider audience is seen as one of the Forum’s key roles.

The Urban Forum meets four times a year, but much of its work is done through networking and informal sub-groups. In order to maximise the contribution and commitment of its members, all of whom work in a voluntary capacity and have heavy professional workloads of their own, it sets annual work programmes with a strategic framework and realistic targets for delivery.

The Urban Forum was established as a working group in 1988. Its main work has been in publishing papers, preparing comments on national issues and policies, generating new concepts, guidelines and research, organising conferences and workshops, and networking with other expert groups. Some of its work is done in collaboration with other organisations. It also awards the UK-MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence (which includes the MAB logo) to key demonstration projects – a process that involves site visits and appraisals.

(Provisional) 2008/2009 work programme:

Topic	Project	Leader	Targets	Progress as at June 2008	Outcomes
NEW WORK:					
Conference planning and organisation	Street Trees and Sustainability	Gerald Dawe	(1) An inter-disciplinary meeting to be held on the ecological benefits of street trees, but then integrating this with sustainability areas around economics, philosophy and other cultural meanings of street trees. (2) To write up and make available as 'PDF' file: downloadable from (a) Urban Forum website	Planning is beginning. Conference to be held late 2008/early 2009. Proceedings to be published thereafter.	Conference planned to be held at UCL March 2009. The aim of the conference is to change how urban trees are managed and to influence policy and practice.
Greenspace Toolkit	Workshop	Pete Frost / Gerald Dawe	A meeting between greenspace and planning practitioners concerned with looking at productivity and ecological relationships of greenspaces and their use in planning, both at strategic and development control levels.	Some planning has been done. Scheduled for Spring/Summer 2009.	Decision to hold a workshop with about 20 selected practitioners representing all stakeholders from government to community groups. JP, ID and PF to draft a scoping study.
Qualitative versus quantitative aspects of urban greenspace	Project work	Various. Provisionally, Greenspace Scotland. Eilidh Johnson/ Julie Proctor	To provide a clear perspective on people-open space relationships in the context of 'qualitative' versus 'quantitative' work.	Initiating.	
Handbook of Urban Ecology	Contribution of chapters by people within the	Ian Douglas	To contribute towards a new monograph of urban ecology. Cultural and ethical	Initiating.	Routledge have agreed to publish. ID has found authors for most chapters

	Forum		connections with ecology emphasised.		but some are still required. David Goode has agreed to co-edit.
Human Ecology conference, University of Manchester	Contribution of UK-MAB Urban Forum perspective towards the meeting	Ian Douglas	To contribute towards this international meeting.	To be held at University of Manchester June 29 th to July 3 rd 2009. UK MAB Urban Forum to organise a symposium	Conference plans progressing and on schedule. UK MAB Forum has confirmed that it will organise a symposium and has agreed to fund up to 5 speakers. GD has agreed to give a keynote speech.
Core work:					
MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	Developing the Award	Gerald Dawe	Develop Award plaques. Continue review of existing Award sites.	Ongoing	
Contributing to MAB	UK MAB committee	Pete Frost / Gerald Dawe	Ensure Forum liaises effectively with parent committee.	Active and ongoing aided by both Pete Frost and Gerald Dawe.	
	Urban Biosphere Reserves	Pete Frost	To report progress from the UK on the application of the Biosphere Reserve concept to human settlements. Contribute, via members on the UNESCO MAB Urban Forum, to development of international criteria for Urban Biosphere Reserves and assessment of applications for Urban Biosphere Reserve status.	Continuing.	
The Urban Forum website	Development and maintenance	Urban Forum Secretariat	To ensure the website acts as an effective means to communicate the Forum's work to interested parties	The website is up to date with the exception of "Annual Report and Work Programme" where updating is in process.	
Maintaining the Urban		Gerald Dawe	To secure sufficient funds for the Forum's core costs and	Ongoing.	Funding is secured until end 2009.

Forum's financial security			ensure funds are secured to implement work programme projects.		
'Diversity and Disadvantage'			Addressing Equal Opportunities / Women's and Minority rights within the existing workstream.	Ongoing	
NEAR COMPLETION OR COMPLETED:					
Practical Benefits of Designing & Managing for Nature	The Endless Village revisited	Peter Shirley	Publication.	Completed and published on web site.	
Conference planning and organisation	'Statins and Greenspace': Health and the Urban Environment	Gerald Dawe & (co-editor) Alison Millward	(1) To review the relationship between health and urban open space via a conference. (2) To write up and make available as 'PDF' file: downloadable from (a) Urban Forum website; and (b) UCL Environment Institute	Completed, published on web site and circulated to delegates and Forum members. Further copies are available from the Secretary.	
	Street Trees and Sustainability	Gerald Dawe	Publicise research work on Street Trees and Sustainability. Conference to be held in May or June 2010	Working paper <i>Characterising Urban Environmental Thinking: Towards Street Trees and Practical Sustainability</i> (Feb. 2005) on web site. Will feed into the above Street Trees and Sustainability meeting.	
	An assessment of the capacity of Local Authorities to undertake integrated management of	John Handley	To include this project within the outputs of a research project on urban greenspace under a Simon Fellowship from the University of Manchester	Completed. Presented to the Forum by Alan Barber.	

	greenspace networks				
	Urban habitat mapping and evaluation	Peter Jarvis	Review state-of-the-art in this area, from site-based studies to spatially complete and contextual mapping. Use of GIS and other cartographic techniques. Integration of ecological and social criteria in gauging relative and absolute 'site quality'. Evaluation as tool for planners, landscape designers and environmental managers, etc. working within urban landscapes.	Report completed. Paper <i>The mapping of urban habitat and its evaluation</i> (May 2005) on web site.	
	Working with CABE and CABE Space	Mathew Frith	To coordinate work in line with CABE priorities and to ensure that the Forum's work has the maximum impact within CABE	Status uncertain. This will be reviewed in the coming year.	CABE Space to host a meeting of the Forum
Health and Human Dimensions of Urban Ecosystems	Why nature is good for you	Ian Douglas	To publish as a paper within <i>Statins and Greenspaces: Health and the Urban Environment</i>	Completed. Paper <i>Urban greenspace and mental health</i> on web site.	
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution	Input to RCEP report on the urban environment	David Goode	Contribute towards RCEP, such that they take into account multifunctional role of urban greenspace.	Completed. David Goode's 'Urban Infrastructure' report will be available as: (1) a download; or (2) a link from the urban forum website.	Publications on to UK MAB Urban Forum web site
Urban Ecology	International Urban Ecology seminar	David Goode?	Plan a Joint IUCN and UK-MAB Urban Forum seminar to be held 2008-09.	Content being devised by David Goode and the UF forum. To be continued.	Joint IUCN and UK MAB Forum seminar- at a date still to be decided.