

# The UK-MAB Urban Forum

[www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk](http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk)

Annual Report 2011/12 and Provisional Work Programme 2012/13



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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 27 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, initiatives and publications – a process that involves site visits and expert appraisals.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

## Activities

- The Forum responded to the Planning Framework consultation process
- The Forum responded to Defra Independent Panel on Forestry in England
- ID participated on behalf of the Forum in Defra's Green Infrastructure Partnership

## Awards

- Roots and Shoots, a London wildlife garden and youth training centre, was awarded the Forum's UK MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence.

## Meetings

- Regular meetings of the Forum were held on 11<sup>th</sup> July (Natural England, London), 6<sup>th</sup> October (Roots and Shoots, London) and 18<sup>th</sup> January (University of Manchester).

## Presentations to Forum meetings

- 'The Genecon system for quantifying the benefits of urban greenspace' by Paul Nolan (Mersey Forest).
- 'Changes in garden structure in London between 1998-9 and 2006-7, a brief insight' by Mathew Frith
- Linking the arts with urban greenspace issues by David Haley (Manchester Metropolitan University), Celia Spouncer (Spouncer Ecology) and Kerry Morrison (University of Salford)

## Membership

Fellows: Allison Millward and Judy Ling-Wong were elected Fellows of the Forum.

New Members: Terry Robinson (Independent Consultant) and Chris Nevin (Scottish Natural Heritage)

Resignations: None

### Financial Statement to year ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012

The income of the Forum from its traditional funders (NE, CCW, SNH and NIER) remained drastically reduced due to cut-backs. CCW provided £500.00 and NE provided substantial benefit in kind by hosting two meetings in London. However, the Urban Wildlife Network was wound up early in 2012 and the Forum became the beneficiary of their assets which amounted to £4,583.00.

#### Expenditure:

General expenditure of the Forum to year ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012 to cover the Forum's core work (Cost of meetings of the Forum, members travel expenses in attending meetings of the Forum which could not be recovered elsewhere, maintaining the web site).

£ 1,263.00

Non-recurring expenditure items:

- Brochure and Flyer

£ 275.00

- **Total expenditure**

**£ 1,538.00**

#### Income:

From funders

£ 500.00

From Urban Wildlife Network

£ 4,583.00

**Total income**

**£ 5,083.00**

#### Reserves:

Bank balance at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010:

£ 7,327.00

Minus outstanding liability (production of award plaque)

£ 131.00

**Total reserves**

**£ 7,196.00**

At the time of writing this report, secured income from the Forum's traditional funders to year ending 5<sup>th</sup> April 2013 is only £500.00. However, some of the traditional funders have indicated their willingness to continue to provide benefits in kind, such as hosting meetings of the Forum. Thanks to the one-off receipt of funds from the Urban Wildlife Network the Forum's finances are adequate to cover anticipated expenses for the immediate future. Nevertheless, long-term funding of the Forum remains to be secured.

## 2012/2013 Provisional Work Programme

### Core Work

Topic	Project	Targets
Scientific	Science related work and outputs	Guidance documents; publications; organising conferences/seminars; attending conferences; participation in consultation processes; etcetera.
MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	Developing the Award	Awards to appropriate urban nature reserves and individuals. Reviewing existing awarded sites.
Contributing to MAB	UK MAB committee	Ensure Forum liaises effectively with parent committee.
Urban Biosphere	Applying the Biosphere Reserve concept to urban areas	To report progress from the UK on the application of the Biosphere Reserve concept to human settlements and to collaborate internationally on the achievement of target 23.1 from the UNESCO MAB Madrid Action Plan: To facilitate the integration of urban areas into Biosphere Reserves.
The Urban Forum website	Development and maintenance	To ensure the website acts as an effective means to communicate the Forum's work to interested parties
Maintaining the Urban Forum's financial security		To secure sufficient funds for the Forum's core costs and ensure funds are secured to implement work programme projects.
Membership of the Urban Forum	Attracting appropriate nominees to the Forum	To ensure that the Forum membership continues to be represented by top specialists and continues to reflect and express current thinking and the state of the art in nature conservation in urban areas.  Annual review of the membership structure by the membership committee.
Topic	Project	Targets

## Forum Projects (prospective, new and current work)

Topic	Project	Principal participants	Targets	Progress as at 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012
Greenspace Toolbox	To undertake an overview and assessment of existing greenspace toolkits and other methods of evaluating and valuing ecosystem services.	Ian Douglas, Pete Frost, John Handley and Philip James	To hold a conference in 2012 or 2013 for professionals on toolkit compilation and assessment.	<i>Toolkits workshop held at University of Salford 15/11/2011. 2 working parties established, one to examine socio-cultural evaluations, the other to examine economic/ecological evaluations.</i>
Passing Through: Urban Greening and Future Water for Town and Cities	Objective is to hold a conference and workshop on this topic under the UNESCO label in 2012/13 and to produce a unique paper/guidance document.	Ian Douglas, Jane Houghton, John Handley, Nigel Lawson and Peter Shirley		<i>Initial discussion document prepared and circulated to members</i>  <i>Sub-committee held a meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Members to hold a series of discussions with organisations such as CIRIA, UU, Defra/EA, Water UK, Waterwise, the RHS and others.</i>
Textbook on Urban Ecology	Following publication of the Handbook on Urban Ecology, Taylor and Francis have asked ID about a Textbook on Urban Ecology	Ian Douglas and Philip James	To edit a textbook on urban ecology	<i>Contract with Routledge signed in December 2011 with final manuscript to be submitted by April 2013.</i>
City People and the Nation's Forests	Forum briefing paper emphasising that woodland places like Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, the Wield of Kent, Red Rose Forest, Delamere Forest and those of the Peak District and Lake District are of as much importance to the people of the urban conurbations such as London and Manchester as they are to the people living in their immediate proximity.	Ian Douglas, David Goode, Philip James, and John Handley.	To prepare and distribute a guidance document.	DG has established that Ted Trzyna would be interested in such a review.  <i>A response to the Independent Panel on Forestry in England was submitted at the end of July 2012.</i>
Training Sessions for RTPI	To undertake a training session for RTPI to raise awareness of green infrastructure in respect of adaptation strategies to climate change.	Alison Millward, Ambra Burls and Joanne Tippet	For RTPI to raise awareness of green infrastructure in respect of adaptation strategies to climate change	AM and AB are devising an appropriate training module. JT agreed to provide input into this process.  <i>AM investigating possibilities with RTPI At 120405 update awaited</i>

MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	Awarding suitable sites/projects.  JLW has agreed to promote the Award, to undertake a review of the award criteria, and to investigate how the Forum can offer ongoing support to Award winners.	JLW and Members	To complete the assessments of nominated sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Black Country Living Landscapes: assessed and approved by John Box</li> <li>· <i>Wigan Greenheart being assessed by JFH and NL who will report to next meeting</i></li> <li>· <i>Leicester's Eco-House being assessed by PS</i></li> <li>· <i>Black Environment Network being assessed by JB</i></li> <li>· <i>Buglife's application is under consideration by ID</i></li> <li>· <i>News from MF awaited re potential of Clapton Park, London Rivers Action Plan and Brighton White Walks</i></li> </ul>
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Principal participants</b>	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Progress as at 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012</b>