

**MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT
MANAGEMENT GROUP (PMG) HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL ON
TUESDAY, 20th MARCH 2007**

Present: Juliet Wheatley – Chairperson, Team Leader Landscape & Biodiversity – Hfds Council
Jo Hackman – Ecologist (Nature Conservation)
Nicky Davies – Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator
Steve Roe – BRC Manager
Charlotte Morgan – Natural England

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Fran Griffith (Conservation Manager, HNT) and Geoff Perrott (Hfds Partnership Environmental Co-ordinator)

2. Minutes of Last Meeting – 9th January 2007

JW asked if all present agreed with previous Minutes – all happy.

3. Matters Arising

JW went through Action Points from previous Minutes.

- Point 4.2, paragraph 2 – ND has amended wording.
- Point 4.5 – ND has amended wording on Point 2, Key Performance Indicators.
- Point 4.11 – ND to inform Council and Natural England of training schedule. ND has orchard training lined up but nothing internal.
- Point 6, Communication Plan – RE has been asked to assist in making the document attractive, however, still not on website yet. SR asked if the likelihood of it going on web was imminent – this depends on availability of ND's time because KPI work has been given priority. ND has done amendments.
- Point 7.3, drafting of enabling fund – to be discussed later.
- Point 8, suggestion for structure of Business Plan – ND has had some feedback from JH, she has suggested framework.

4. Work Programme and Co-ordinators Report

ND gave brief over-view:

- 4.1 BAP Review – ND reported this was 'hard going' and she is still writing up report. MJ, Nick Smith and CM need to tie up a few issues and get them sent in to Nicky before it goes out. This report is approx 30 pages long (4th edition). **Action: ND to send out reminder for amendments**
- 4.2 Workshops – ND felt these had been quite positive with some good outcomes. People are more focused on what they are doing and it has made BAP more of a priority in their work programmes.
- 4.3 Bulmers – ND has had good response locally and nationally regarding their new position as plan lead for the orchard HAP.
- JH informed the Group that she and ND had discussed BAP Review and they need to produce a timetable for the next round of workshops required to complete the review process.
- 4.4 ND reported first round of BAP revision workshops were held in the Shire Hall. These proved to be very informative and gave ND and attendees a better understanding of new targets/actions definitions. However, ND said she cannot answer large queries and needs time to find out everyone's expectations. ND is to contribute info to a report that is being prepared. This will then be circulated to people who attended. **Action: ND**

4.5 ND stated she had attended the Regional Climate Change and Biodiversity 'Task and Finish' Group but felt she could not feed in to it much. There are a lot of economic issues and ND thought it would take a couple of meetings to establish the objectives. JW asked if GP might be more suitable for it as he specialises in that area. ND said both GP and herself still want to attend. ND advised the regional group are using the Hereford Declaration as an example of good practice.

4.6 ND advised Communication Plan was complete. Communication Plan to be made available on the HBP website. **Action: ND**

4.7 ND had completed the Newsletter. However, she thought it was too long this time (8 sides). CM commented that it was acceptable for the occasional one to be long and the general feeling was that it was good to have it lengthy. JW and SR liked it and found it interesting and informative. It was pointed out that the geodiversity page had a mistake on it – this proves people are reading it!

SR suggested an 'Events' section within the Newsletter might be good. ND would like to keep it to one page so CM suggested ND could choose things directly related to BAP. Discussions continued and it was decided that incorporating links for websites seemed to be the best idea.

4.8 Geodiversity Action Plan – ND said consultation document is now out. JW asked if ND would give consultation response – nobody else required to comment. ND said now that the framework for Geodiversity Action Plan has been produced and Moira Jenkins is seeking funding to get it adopted.

4.9 Strategic Wetlands Group - SR stated that he has been asked to provide a quote to Nature Trust re data search. A large-scale wetland project within the county is planned. SR needs to know what is needed i.e. maps. SR has spoken to Chris Mayes who has experience on Lincolnshire and Somerset wetland mapping and will maintain inputting on this project. Relationship with the County Green Infrastructure Study needs to be established.

Discussions continued and it was agreed that input to this project should be encouraged, although with caution.

4.10 ND reported that she has had meeting with Dave Tristram and Clare Wichbold who suggested holding funding workshops for partners in the environmental sector. They will be held on 2nd May (Funding bids) and 16th May (Business planning). ND then sent out an e-mail to partners informing them of the upcoming events and also mentioned it in the newsletter. She has had a good response. CW is happy to assist. DT and CW are looking at LBAP and different funding options available in preparation for these events. **Action: ND to make this info available in leaflet**

Funding budgets – ND has managed to secure £16,000 from the Natural England underspend across the county. JH congratulated ND for co-ordinating this work with partners at such short notice.

4.13 Future meetings:

- 26 March – Hogweed on the Wye Meeting, hosted by the EA (ND will be shadowed by Sadie Reade on that day)
- 17 April – Regional LBAP Co-ordinators Meeting
- 21 April – BBC Springwatch event at Courtyard (ND spoke to BBC on 19 March, confirmed she will be doing a display on 21 April)
- 24 April – WMBP AGM in Birmingham
- 21 May – Old Orchard Workshops, Pershore College
- 21 May – Regional Climate Change 'Task and Finish' Group Meeting

Ideas were discussed for the display for the BBC Springwatch event. These included orchards (JW suggested speaking to Tanners as local cider would link to economic value), damson hedges and the landscape aspect (this would raise the profile of Herefordshire).

5. Key Performance Indicators and BAP Review (item 6 on the Agenda)

5.1 ND had figures available and was pleased to report they have ‘smashed’ targets this year. JH acknowledged ND’s major success in this area of work with the Council.

5.2 Highways - ND said that she needs to focus more effort on highways next year. It was suggested that ND and JH have a meeting with Shropshire County Council to learn from their experience in this area. **Action: JH and ND**

5.3 One idea is to have a Roadsides Biodiversity Action Plan – but there are lots of things to consider before this approach is taken.

Schools – ND said that she and Rachel Elliott had been looking at conservation areas within schools, mapping them using GIS and making management recommendations.

Smallholdings – ND informed Group that a questionnaire has been sent out to leaseholders and small-holdings by Helen Beale of the Council. WNB has suggested ND makes a presentation to the Council. **Action: ND**

ND advised that she plans to concentrate on KPI work in next couple of weeks and that it will be completed by the next meeting.

6. Fund Raising/Budget

6.1 ND has had meeting with JH re potential framework for business strategy. CM advised that she and JE are going to have a meeting with MJ on this. ND asked for ideas on how to take this forward.

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6.2 It is understood that a financial strategy is required in the SLA as a requirement from Natural England and JH asked for more guidance from NE on what is needed.. As CM is a newcomer to this, she felt she could not add anything at the moment. **Action: CM to speak with NE colleagues to find this out.**

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6.3 It is necessary to establish what further financial contributions are needed for the BAP project e.g.. equipment, materials needed or someone to assist ND with her workload. CM advised ND that she will need to quantify amounts of time allocated to certain things later on and the level of volunteer work needs to be factored in to it. ND stated that she did not feel comfortable doing this on her own – CW happy to help ND in the business planning aspect of this. CM recommended that ND write a list of work she is doing; time involved and expertise required then may be someone else could assist with some of the other things.

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6.4 CM advised that she is still going through the learning process on how things are funded. She has requested the funding for next year but has not had anything confirmed yet. She now needs to look at funding for next three years.

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6.5 Statement of Requirement – should only tender for this if everything can be delivered. SR and ND may need to quantify times to give proof for funding. JH suggested ND tabulated times and activities to support process for funding. **Action: ND**

SR is working on Strategic Document at present and he offered ND the use of it.

6.6 Funding – JH felt that the Council is already making a significant contribution therefore, other sources of funding also need to be looked at. ND advised that for the past year she had been building relationships with partners/people, which she wanted to continue. ND needs to do an evaluation of times spent on different areas of work and for the different partners. JW requested some results from ND by next meeting. **Action: ND**

The next step after the audit needs to be prioritising work and costing out differences for missing links. JH felt that further issues would come out of the workshops, which can be fed in. Funding was discussed further and it was suggested that ND prepares some broad estimates to support her needs. **Action: ND to do breakdown**

JW stated that a contribution of £500-£1000 was going to be looked at by the Council as a pot of money for ND to use for events, equipment etc. **Action: JW to speak to WNB re setting up funding for next financial year.**

ND advised that letters were going to be sent to partners to 'add' on to this. JH suggested it would be a good idea for ND to identify needs and to make clear in letter what money would be used for. ND needs to set some criteria. **Action: ND**

7. AOB

Timetables – ND to focus on activities for next three months:

- a) Report on BAP Review
- b) Initiating BARS training

Action: ND to do Report second week of April hopefully

- Other work constraints – website, Natural England 6-monthly Report.
- Initiations by other partners – focus will be funding workshops
- Projects – Bodenham Lake otter project
- Communication Plan – ND needs to give this to JH re shows, events during summer. ND advised that she has set of boards for advertising, however, she is happy to take any publications anyone can give her. **Action: ND to check Communication Plan re activities to be brought in this quarter**

CM stated that in the English Nature Service Level Agreement with the Partnership, 6.3 states that 'the need of each year – the Project Manager will consider if things continue'. CM suggested this might be a way of highlighting any problems i.e. barriers or shortfalls as it is necessary to know the activities ND is struggling to achieve, so that things can be prioritised to help her.

8. Date of Next Meeting

This meeting was previously arranged for Tuesday, 3 July 2007, however this has now been changed to Wednesday, 18 July 2007, in Bodenham Room, Plough Lane, commencing at 10.00am.