

**MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT GROUP (PMG) HELD AT PLOUGH ON TUESDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> JAN 2007**

Present: Juliet Wheatley – Chairman, Team Leader Landscape & Biodiversity – Hfds Council  
Nicky Davies – Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator  
Steve Roe – BRC Manager  
Geoff Perrott – Hfds Partnership Environmental Co-ordinator  
Francesca Griffith – Conservation Manager, HNT  
David Heaver – Natural England

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mark July (Natural England) and Jo Hackman (Ecologist, Hfds Council).

2. Minutes of Last Meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Following points discussed:

- ND has spoken to GE re attending meetings – he agreed it was not necessary, however, he would like to be kept in the loop and requested copies of all Minutes.
- 3.6 – Rural Spatial Strategy to be amended to Regional Spatial Strategy.

3. Matters Arising

ND went through Action Points from previous Minutes.

- Point 3.6 – Role of Herefordshire LBAP (monitoring), GE has not responded to ND on this yet.
- Point 4.3 – ND has had training with Chris Harris and resolved ‘firewall’ issues. ND now needs to put some time aside to edit on the website.
- Point 3.9 – Business Approach within Strategy, ND not had discussions with WNB yet.
- Point 4.6 – BARS. ND has had meetings with some people (to be discussed later).
- Point 5.2 – ND to chase up as she is having difficulty obtaining info from English Nature at the moment. She has numerous Partnership meetings to attend.
- Point 6.1 – this relates to workshops in a few weeks time.
- Point 7.4 – re points 6.17 and 7.1 have now been amended.
- Point 8.2 – re budget (to be discussed later).
- Point 8.3 – ND’s fund for biodiversity projects, ND queried this at LBAP Co-ordinators Meeting. It was suggested Partners were asked for a nominal amount of money.
- Point 9.1 – ND has produced Communication Strategy, draft has been distributed. ND stated would like to finalise this today.

4. Work Programme

4.1 ND asked the Group now that they have had chance to look through it, were there any questions? FG wanted some clarification on the KPI’s and small holdings ie does it include allotments? ND replied “no”.

4.2 SR suggested everyone should see the Report. ND said the Report is basically a list of all the work she had done over the last 9 months approx and not ‘proposed’ work, therefore, she only felt It necessary to send it out to relevant people. SR thought it might be helpful to have their comments.

SR suggested the last sentence of Point 2 in Work Programme and Outline Report should be amended to 'it is expected that the outcome of these workshops .....' rather than 'it is hoped' because this sounds negative. **Action: ND to amend**

- 4.3 As FG is closely involved with Commons Project, she wanted some clarification from ND on progress. ND explained they are looking at small commons which they are going to change ie those which do not have any management whatsoever. The aim is to choose some which have potential (ND will be having a meeting with Trevor and development people). ND has been unable to commit to this fully recently as she has had to devote time to workshops, however, she plans to be more involved after the workshops. JW emphasised that everyone must always ensure they communicate who is involved with each aspect of work to enable her to have an over-view of things and prioritise workload. JW hoped Chris Mayes would be involved in ND's work as much as possible.
- 4.4 Discussion on technical biodiversity objectives began – ND stated that if there is no Project Officer in place ie if not AONB, it is a bit of a struggle, but hopefully it should pick up in Spring. GE had requested ND completes on it, however, as she did not think it her role, was reluctant to do so, therefore it has been 'pushed back' to GE.
- 4.5 SR requested an amendment to wording, Point 2, Key Performance Indicators. To be changed to 'Paul Zagni and Steph Thompson, Botanical Recorders' and to erase '(Hfds Botanical Society)'.
- 4.6 ND reported all future meetings have been agreed (another one 10th Jan 2007).
- 4.7 ND has started school visits (done 13 so far) and digitising school grounds. It is a random selection of schools to get an over-view as to what resource they have. Good progress to date.
- 4.8 Future work – ND said she is engaging in Communication Strategy and wants workload for the next year agreed today. She needs to become more pro-active in this. ND will be doing KPI work (probably spending more time on this in next few months) and needs to produce something by end of financial year. ND has BAP Review and is looking at holding workshops in February within the area.
- 4.9 As requested at previous PMG meeting, ND is creating funding database (to put on website). JW advised ND that if she was collating info on what funding is available, that there is a section in the Council which specialises in a variety of funding. The contact is Claire Wichbold. It was thought this would be a quick way of obtaining info as they would be up-to-date with everything, which would save ND wasting time on it. However, ND advised she too receives info constantly on grants that are available. The general opinion was that they probably receive info that maybe ND does not and visa-versa. However, as they are a specialist area in this, it is likely that they have info sitting on a database and they have over-view of everything.
- 4.10 ND is going to try and re-enthuse people about water vole work as it has gone 'dead'.

SR said that he seemed to remember Ian Lindsay was going to put together some costings and thought it a sensible suggestion to do a cost basis. **Action: ND to speak to JH**

FG advised there is still some funding available for water voles which was intended for survey work. FG said it is recognised that one of the priorities is to get some survey work on the existing population done.

- 4.11 ND advised she will be spending more time supporting Partners on project work. GP advised ND has been asked at next Environment Meeting to give some key actions for this year. ND needs to know if there is anything she is not aware of. She needs to know her aims for biodiversity. ND advised revision of LBAP will be spread out over year.

SR suggested in-putting some info on projects in progress eg Ponds Phase II. It is necessary to maintain projects on-going at moment. GP suggested that if a specific question is asked, then they can be put in touch with appropriate person.

ND advised she has spent past year identifying gaps in LBAP and is now 'getting up to scratch' with the Partnership, taking it out to a wider audience. ND said portions of time had not been an issue for her apart from the KPI work. There is great variety in her job, she has done a lot of work for Natural England and regional work, however, she has not been able to do any Council work for a while. ND has put two weeks aside for her KPI work.

FG said ND needs to identify priorities in next year, which is part of BARS, draw out projects and try and get funding for them.

The Council and Natural England need to know ND's schedule (ND has no training booked and no plans to). **Action: ND**

## 5. BAP Review

5.1 ND advised this would be held on 23rd January 2007. Generally, response has been quite positive. FWAG are unable to come and some other key people. ND felt people are 'ducking' out of responsibility to LBAP duties. ND should have some figures and ideas at end of workshops.

5.2 FWAG not attending was a concern. ND said it is difficult because you can not force people to attend these meetings. ND still waiting for Natural England to commit (she has spoken to MJ). DH suggested maybe something needs to be done to make people more interested. Forestry Commission are attending and National Forestry Biodiversity person coming too. It appears all BAP Partnerships have had problems with forestry people, so it is good news they are coming, also their data sets are incompatible so they will be able to set some guidelines re transferring/translating data.

5.3 Partnerships status on LBAP Review so far:

- Shrewsbury - recently revised LBAP
- Worcestershire – in process
- Staffordshire – looking to do complete review rather than revision
- Warwickshire – quite behind
- Black country – have recently appointed an LBAP Officer, so they are not doing so well
- Herefordshire – in middle

SR suggested a summary document/table would be a good idea after workshops have been concluded. This would highlight the problems.

## 6. Communication Strategy

ND reported this had been distributed and invited comments (ND only has JH's at moment). As ND has not had any other feedback, she presumes, therefore, nobody else has any comments to add. MJ suggested it goes in with an Appendix to the SLA. ND said it needs to be modified for website. **Action: ND to ask RE to jazz it up a bit**

Amendments:

- Point 2 - "To produce a SMART plan to open access to the Hfds ....." to be changed to "to promote access".

- Point 4.7 - “Ensure a web-based presence for the Partnership” to be amended to “Ensure a website for the Partnership”.
- Point 3 - Heading to be amended to “Target Audiences”.
- Point 5.1 - to be amended to “Hfids Council”.
- Point 5.5 - to be amended to ‘Potential Partners within the BAP Partnership’.
- Point 5.6 - to be amended to ‘Existing BAP Partners within the BAP Partnership’.
- Point 6.3 - (to be decided after NENE) to be erased.
- Point 6.14 - ‘ie elderly, disabled ...’ to be amended to ‘eg’
- Point 7.4 - to be amended to ‘Acceptance of the Hfids LBAP as a strategy for nature conservation...’

**Action: ND to amend above**

Communication of process and reaching relevant people with info is still on-going. JW remarked she thought ND had some good concrete ideas. ND is able to identify how many people visit the website and what their enquiry relates to.

7. Fund Raising/Budget

- 7.1 ND reported she needs to speak with WNB and JW re having a proportion of the landscaping budget assigned to BAP. ND said it was suggested the Council in-put the first lump of money followed by sending out a letter to all Partners asking for a nominal amount of money thus enabling money to be used for organising events, training events or anything else which ND can not apply for grants for. In effect this would be a ‘slush fund’.
- 7.2 ND said a lot of money in past year had been spent on hosting events which is a substantial amount out of Juliet’s general budget. ND feels strongly that she represents a Partnership and not the Council and people will want some accountability of expenditure. It was felt that biodiversity should have access to a large fund of money to facilitate day-to-day work.
- 7.3 GP suggested writing a proposal. ND thought WNB, MJ and JH should be involved with this as well. **Action: ND and JW to draft letter re enabling fund. To be e-mailed to Group for comments**

8. ND asked for suggestions for the structure of the Business Plan to be sent to her. ND welcomes ideas, structures, performance times etc. **Action: Everyone**

ND thought Natural England should take the lead on it because it was initiated by them.

9. AOB

ND thanked DH for attending.

10. Dates of Next Three Meetings

Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007, Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2007. Venues TBA