

MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT MANAGEMENT GROUP (PMG) HELD AT PLOUGH LANE, HEREFORD ON 22ND JANUARY 2008

Present: Juliet Wheatley – Chairperson, Team Leader, Landscape & Biodiversity – Herefordshire Council
Jo Hackman, Ecologist (Nature Conservation)
Nicky Davies – Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator
Charlotte Morgan – Natural England
Francesca Griffith – Conservation Manager, Hereford Nature Trust
Nick Smith, Woodland Officer, Forestry Commission

1. Apologies: Apologies were received from Steve Roe, Biological Records Centre Manager.
2. Minutes of previous meeting – Tuesday 2nd October 2007: It was agreed that the previous minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.
3. Matters arising: All actions identified in the Minutes of the meeting of 2nd October 2007 have been completed except for 5.1 which is for ND to liaise with Jeff Edwards to ask if he still wants to arrange a meeting with HC forward planning team.
Action: Nicky to check if Jeff Edwards can arrange a meeting with the Forward Planning Section.
4. Work Programme and Co-ordinator's Report
 - 4.1 Lower Lugg Otter Project: a contract has been issued to Swift Ecology. Bodenham Lake and the Lugg catchment area will be surveyed.
 - 4.2 Ponds Restoration Project: this has been completed and the project officer has nearly completed the final report.
 - 4.3 The Adder Project developed by HART: a bid has been submitted to the 'Your Heritage Fund', with a letter of support from Glenys Tucker of Natural England.
 - 4.4 Butterfly Conservation Trust: Bernadette Noake has moved out of Herefordshire but can still be contacted at their head office on Dorset – Nicky can provide contact details, if required.
 - 4.5 BARS: Nicky has been entering data onto BARS so that we can start reporting nationally in the UK BAP reporting round as a priority. Nicky showed a template of some of the revised plans to the management group produced by Grace Adams, a student who was on placement with Nicky, assisting with BARS data extraction work.
Action: Nicky needs to proof read the template and post it on the local Biodiversity Action Plan website.
Jo highlighted the need for lead partners to take responsibility for BARS, given that long-term input from the Biodiversity Partnership Officer cannot be guaranteed. Partners must understand how BARS functions and the benefits of using it. Jo reported that the first set of action plans have been entered onto BARS and that approximately one third of the LBAP has been revised.
Jo and Fran thanked Nicky for her hard work on BARS.

- 4.6 NERC: a promotional event has been planned for 12th March 2008. The list of speakers is to be confirmed. Fran advised that HNT has produced a guidance leaflet for NERC, aimed at local authorities, which can be circulated at the event.
- 4.7 Biodiversity training for Planning Services staff: this is scheduled for 18th March 2008. Mike Oxford will be delivering this training in accordance with information sent from Bridgit Symons & JH.
- 4.8: Addressing the issue of climate change in relation to the BAP: Nicky proposed that this should be tackled initially by undertaking a feasibility study to determine whether it is necessary to have an over-arching Biodiversity & Climate change action plan. This will take place on the form of a review of literature on climate change, together with interviews with key partners in the county. Another student, Yasmin, from the Holme Lacy Sustainability Masters course, will do this work who will be on placement with Nicky in the summer. Charlotte confirmed that Mark July of NE supported this concept. Nick advised that he had discussed this issue with Rachel Sharpe and that she wanted to produce a leaflet to demonstrate potential impacts of climate change on Herefordshire. Fran suggested that there is a need to identify what can be done at county level, given that most climate change work is done at a national level. Juliet suggested that the Landscape Institute were currently focussing on the impacts of climate change on the natural environment and that they might be a good source of information to assist Yasmin with this piece of work.
- 4.9 Workload: Nicky reported that the BAP revision work and inputting information onto BARS were the main priorities at present. She has also contributed a significant amount of time to organising the NERC promotional event. This will continue until the event has been held.
- 4.10 KPI work: Nicky aims to complete the report by the end of March 2008. Bill Bloxsome, Conservation Manager, is yet to sign off the KPI report for 2007. Jo advised that if the council adopts a national biodiversity indicator, the KPI indicator might change.
- 4.11 Dealing efficiently with any NE underspend: Jo identified that accepting additional funding can lead to pressure on workload and that there may be a need to be selective about what money is accepted. Ways of minimising staff administration time might include capital spend, e.g. a new grass cutting machine for Parks & Countryside, or spending money on further phases of existing projects.
5. Training: Nicky will attend media training and an RSPB course in September.
6. AOB:
- 6.1 Chairing the Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership Project Management Group: Charlotte agreed to take over from Juliet in the role of chairperson, in accordance with the requirement for the role of chairperson to rotate around the funding partners, as set out in the Project Management Group Terms of Reference.
- 6.2 Regional BAP Managers meeting: the aim of this is for the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership to discuss the relationship between the regional and local partnerships. Jo and Charlotte will be attending but not the LBAP officers. Nick queried whether the regional partnership was fulfilling its prescribed role as supporting the local LBAP officers – he wondered whether its focus had switched to setting the agenda for BAP work. Nicky shared this concern – her view is that

the regional BAP meetings should function as a forum for local BAP officers. However, Nicky explained that Jeff Edwards' role as Regional Biodiversity Co-ordinator has changed slightly – his role is now that of a regional level NE advocate.

- 6.3 Funding issues: funding for 2008/2009 will be £16,000, an increase of £6,000 on funding received for 2007/2008. All of the strategic LBAPs are to be given the extra £6,000 with a new MoA and changes to the core services as laid down in the NE Service Level Agreement. Charlotte, Jo and Bill Bloxsome will discuss financial arrangements after the meeting.