

MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROJECT MANAGEMENT GROUP
(PMG) MEETING HELD AT PLOUGH LANE OFFICES, TUESDAY, 2ND OCTOBER 2007

Present: Juliet Wheatley (JW) – Chairperson, Team Leader Landscape & Biodiversity – Hfds Council
Jo Hackman (JH) – Ecologist (Nature Conservation) - Hfds Council
Steve Roe (SR) - HBRC
Nicky Davies (ND) – Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator
Fran Griffith (FG) – Conservation Manager, HNT
Charlotte Morgan (CM) – Natural England

1. Apologies

No apologies. However, it should be noted that Geoff Perrott has now left his post within Hfds Council and so hence, no longer a member of this group.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting – Wednesday, 18th July 2007

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

3. Matters Arising

The following are the outcome of some actions that were outstanding:

- 4.1 and 4.4 - BAP Review, FG has now received e-mail from ND and so no further action needs to be taken.
- 4.7 – Communication Plan, ND advised should be up-dated by end of w/c Mon 19th October 2007
- 5.2 – KPI's (Highways), FG has spoken to Ben Hodgkiss, Highways department and from that, FG is to review roadside verge NR's. FG will be looking at work going on in other counties and will report back at the next meeting.
- 6.2 – Fund Raising and Budget, ND advised £2,500 has been allocated by Defra for promoting NERC duty but not yet available (ND needs more advice from JE).
- 6.5 – Service Level Agreement to develop a Funding Strategy and Business plan, ND, JH and CM have had meeting re the potential breakdown of work. CM advised she is still working on this.

JW continued with 'Matters Arising' (Action Points) from previous minutes:

- 5.1 – KPI Report, ND advised the KPI Report is now near completion but she needs to make some amendments re data issue. ND wants good baseline set for next year – she has done what has been requested of her but there have been data changes due to criteria being altered. ND has all info in one folder and it is all 'coming together'. ND needs approval from partners within HC before this can be signed off.
- 6.1 - BAP Review, ND advised criteria has now been set through UK BAP review, she is waiting on species and habitat action plans from partners and regional targets. ND said she needs to know what is going on in each UK region but unable to obtain answers at the moment. The BAP Partnership needs to review the Herefordshire biodiversity audit & priority list in the light of the UK review. SR agreed to do a search of the list on their database on behalf of the HBRC.
- 6.2 - Grassland Forum, Consensus amongst those that had attended the last Forum meeting was that it was currently ineffective and disorganised. JW asked for ideas on how to re-focus this. FG suggested this could be achieved if Julie Button was back in the Chair. JH felt it was important to discuss areas of overlap between the two counties and to wait until the next meeting to see if it improves. The general feeling was that grassland actions are not really something that can be pushed forward at the moment unless there are some changes within the forum.

- 7.1 -Fund Raising/Budget, ND advised that the Business Plan meeting had been re-scheduled and gone ahead with JH, ND, CM and another NE representative.
- 7.3 - Grassland HAPS, ND advised she had spoken to Worcs LBAP manager and compiled list of priority habitats to be worked upon by Grassland Forum as a focus for their work.
- 7.4 – West Midlands NERC Duty Pledge - ND advised JE has spoken to WNB and that she has taken a back seat on this issue due to heavy workload. JH had provided some comments on the pledge to JE.
- 7.5 – Circulation of info re NERC money, still on-going.
- 9.3 – Landscapes for Living opportunity mapping event had taken place with presentations by Jeff Edwards and Chris Mayes. There had been poor attendance, which was unfortunate.
- 9.4 A regional forestry forum meeting was held in Birmingham to publicise veteran trees, woods and forests – FG and Chris Mayes attended this.

4. Work Programme and Co-ordinators Report

Everyone in the Group advised they had read this.

- 4.1 ND informed everyone that she has had a few problems getting revision workshops organised – the second tranche of meetings were supposed to be in September but ND has had to postpone them until November due to partners not having the resources to do this by that date. BAP Review progress is now behind schedule. CM was the only person to respond from NE Herefordshire team, in spite of many people being contacted. ND feels BAP Review is important and due to a poor attendance at the Landscapes for Living presentations it seems evident there is a problem with LBAP involvement. Third and final tranche of meetings is planned for January 15th and 16th.
- 4.2 JW reported that she had spoken to Highways engineer who informed her that his team often see otters and details of sightings have been given to HBRC (JW made engineer aware of HBRC). JW suggested a friendly call from SR might be a good idea. Contact is Chris Wright. **Action: SR to contact Chris Wright for more sightings to be sent in**
- 4.3 Orchard Project – ND advised she had written a draft project brief with JW, she has received comments/points of views and now needs to update. Map has been produced. JW and SR have had discussions about priority of habitats & species and it is apparent more needs to be done on this. JW has also spoken to Rob Widdicombe whom it is hoped can do some survey work in the near future on this. **Action: JW to complete the project brief and issue contract.**
- 4.4 FG and JH advised they had attended a HOC/BTO Bird Atlas meeting for the County that proved worthwhile and would deliver a County Breeding Bird Atlas for 2008-2012. SR has spoken with HOC about data provision and detail of location of records – he will be in contact with them to advise how their info could potentially be used. ND advised she has already had a meeting with HOC representatives and Claire Wichbold re: the barn owl species action plan & funding.
- 4.5 Future work:
- Need to provide help to partners with no on-line access, in accessing the LBAP through the provision of a paper copy of all information that is on BARS.
 - ND has a vast amount of work to do with BARS – needs to keep momentum going and offer BARS training to whoever wants it. Website also to be up-dated.
 - Pesticides Seminar – 18 October – organising working with team leaders re pesticides use, legalities etc
 - ND is holding a BARS training day at Nature Trust Offices on 13 November 2007

5. Landscapes for Living

5.1 Chris Mayes has been dealing with this recently. ND unable to report anything other than there are problems with the final maps produced by the consultants. Another meeting is to be scheduled for this with Forward Planners and FG re: LDF. FG felt it is too late to do anything with map – need to concentrate on future work priorities e.g. work on county level. County based opportunities map needs to be drawn up but it is questionable who will take lead on this because no one has the resources to do it. It was felt that a consultant was needed for the next phase. **Action: JE to co-ordinate meeting with forward planners**

5.2 Regional Landscapes for Living Conference is on 3rd December, invites to be sent out shortly by consultants.

6. Local BAP Revision

6.1 ND advised she has had slow feedback on attendance at second tranche of workshops and have had to be postponed until November to allow for giving people more notice for meeting. The third tranche will be held on 15 and 16 January. **Action: ND to organise final tranche of meetings**

6.2 ND is going to send reminder to Partners with newsletter encouraging them to get involved with BAP Review as they need to get involved with the plan for their county and organisation. **Action: ND to add in feature for next newsletter.**

6.3 LBAP Seminar – ND reported it was a successful and informative conference. It was good to talk to other LBAP officers and share their views. Good attendance from Natural England staff. Variety of people to talk to and discussions took place on local and national conservation projects, NERC duties and habitat action group updates.

7. BAP Review

7.1 This has been covered in the meeting - nothing more to mention. JW asked for comments or feedback.

7.2 ND advised she had been invited to next UK BAP Hedgerows Meeting as LBAP representative.

8. Fund Raising/Budget

8.1 CM advised still not had answers from Natural England on future LBAP funding, therefore, nothing to add at the moment. Next round of funding is supposedly imminent (3-yr funding). Await outcome of CM's meeting with colleagues.

9. Training

- “The Biodiversity Duty - Focus on Local Action” at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch – 23-25 October 2007
- Introduction to effective speaking, WMLGA – 30 October 2007

10. AOB

ND stated that with GP leaving, there is now a gap on the Steering Group and asked the Group for advice on whether he should be replaced. GP's role was to feed back LBAP issues to the environment partnership & to integrate the LBAP into the community strategy ND suggested that, if he is to be replaced, one suggestion would be to invite Trish Marsh. ND felt that as far as having to advise NERC duties, Trish might be very suitable and have a knowledge within the Council – might be good to bring her in for specific items on agenda when needed. Discussions continued and ideas were welcomed. JH suggested Nick Smith from the Forestry Commission but this would be dependant on his workload as he also has HOC responsibilities now. It was felt he has a good knowledge of what is going on in the county and we would benefit from FC's involvement in the local BAP process. It has to be considered whether it is necessary to get someone else in at all as funding partners might not think it necessary.

The general feeling was that JW should approach Nick and ask if he is interested, or if not, maybe he could suggest someone. Also, JW would suggest a review to be done in 6/12 months. **Action: JW to e-mail Nick or call him to discuss/ask for suggestions**

- 10.1 FG advised the Wildlife Trust has new Project Officer, Tahaira Ali working on the Lugg project. Biodiversity projects should have lottery funding next year (to be split in to two projects).
- 10.2 SR reported that he has meeting with David Lovelace re: woodland project. He also had regional BRC meeting early last week with positive funding results. West Midlands had been successful in their funding attempt to DEFRA and had to come up with a pilot project in Shropshire. They will be liaising with regional data users and quantifying costs.
- 10.3 Native Woodland Restoration Project – JW, David Lovelace and GIS team have had a meeting. GIS team need to be satisfied with things so David is to produce a trial out-put.
11. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 22 January 2008, am, venue TBA

Dates of next three meetings:

- Tuesday, 22 April 2008
- Tuesday, 22 July 2008
- Tuesday, 21 October 2008