

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership



Minutes of the 56th Steering Group meeting
14th November 2013, 10.30 am Enterprise House, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield - Parks & Countryside Manager, IWC
Cllr Luisa Hilliard – Sustainability Portfolio Holder, IWCI
Colin Pope – Senior Ecology Officer, IWC
Sonia Lorenzo-Martin – Forestry Commission
Jay Doyle - Forestry Commission
Richard Grogan - Head of Conservation (IW), Hants & IW Wildlife Trust
Claire Hamilton – Fisheries & Biodiversity Officer, Environment Agency
Ian Boyd – Natural Enterprise
Joel Bateman – AONB Communications & Projects Officer
Debbie Tann – Chief Executive, Hants & IW Wildlife Trust
Dougal Driver – LNP Strategic Advisor

Apologies: Fiona Hanna (AONB); Tony Tutton (National Trust); Richard Black (RSPB); Mike Pittock (Forestry Estate); Peter Taylor (EA); Ian Boyd (Natural Enterprise)

SG13/27 Minutes of the last meeting

Richard Black was added to the list of those present at the last meeting. The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG13/28 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

There were no other items raised.

SG13/29 East Wight Landscape Partnership

Joel informed the group that the AONB partnership had been successful in their HLS bid for the East Wight Landscape Partnership, a landscape scale project based upon rivers in the East Wight. The bid was for £1.5 million to cover 50% of the project costs. A development officer will now be appointed to take forwards the project over a 12-18 month period and to oversee setting up an East Wight Partnership Board. DT, who sits on the regional HLS board, pointed out that, at this stage, the bid is still competitive.

SG13/30 Local Nature Partnership

Debbie Tann gave a presentation on the progress of the LNP (powerpoint presentation sent with these minutes) and led a discussion on the role of the LNP, progress to date and the way forwards. She explained that the LNP has credibility and influence but does not have money. Dougal Driver provided a helpful insight into the process and the need to talk the language appropriate to the audience when selling the value of the natural capital. The LNP now has a dialogue with the LEP and has a seat at the National Growth Board, which oversees the Structural & Investment Fund Growth Programme for LEPs.

There was some discussion of the relationship of our Biodiversity Steering Group to the LNP. Our group no longer has a key role in the biodiversity process following the withdrawal of BAP from the national framework. It may be that aligning ourselves with the LNP may provide a beneficial role for both our group and the LNP. This may require some changes to the name and role of the Biodiversity Steering Group and it was agreed to bring this for discussion to the next Steering Group meeting.

Action:

- **Liaise on discussion paper to be brought to next Steering Group meeting. DW / CP**

DW informed us that a draft LNP prospectus would be out for consultation before Christmas and members of the Steering Group would be circulated.

Action

- Contact LNP@hwt.org.uk if not currently on LNP circulation list. All

SG13/31 Local Records Centre Report

CP circulated copies of the quarterly report and explained that the reporting format had now changed in order to comply with NE and EA requirements (report to be circulated with these minutes). He also discussed two additional requirements within the MoA this year, namely to promote on-line recording and to test the feasibility of Structured Surveillance monitoring. This involves using volunteers to record species and habitats on a yearly basis for a selection of monitoring sites. An initial meeting has been held with volunteers to discuss this and has met with a generally favourable response. However, there are substantial concerns regarding how volunteers can be effectively managed and devising structures to enable consistent monitoring and recording to take place. The possibility of addressing these concerns regionally, with SE and Greater London Local Record Centres, is being considered. However, at this stage, the feeling of SE LRCs is that will be unable to deliver the required Structured Surveillance outcomes without additional funding. There is also a need for Natural England to provide much clearer guidance on what these outcomes should be.

Action

- **Date of IW Recorders Conference is Saturday 1st February 14.00 at Arreton Village Hall. All**
- **The quarterly report for July to September is circulated with these minutes.**

SG 13/32 Snails & Millipedes

The Environmental Monitoring 2020 paper, agreed at our last Steering Group meeting, identified a number of national priority species for which we have little up to date information for the Island. One of these was a millipede, *Trachysphaera lobata*, which is being taken forwards by Natural Enterprise (not present at the meeting). Another is Desmoulin's whorl snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*). Following a failure to enlist a specialist consultant to look for the mollusc this summer at Freshwater Marshes, an informal group comprising Claire Hamilton, Ian Boyd, Colin Pope & Claire Hector spent a day surveying the marsh. Although none of those people have any direct experience of this species, they do have an understanding of the habitat niche and ecological requirements and the methodology for survey. The methodology recommended by EA was adopted in those remaining areas of the site most suitable ecologically for the species. No evidence of Desmoulin's whorl snail was found. Indeed, the molluscan flora in the most suitable sites was disappointingly poor and ground conditions were dry. Our conclusions were that the species was not considered to be present, at least at population levels to be expected to support a sustainable population, in August 2013. Further targetted survey work by specialists would be needed to throw more light on this.

SG13/32 Any Other Business

Cllr Hilliard introduced the topic of the management of Council owned recreation grounds. She would like the Council to be in position to pass many of these over to local community group or charities. She is pursuing the possibility of planting community or wildlife orchards across the island using lottery funding. She welcomed any feedback or thoughts. A final report is due to go to her sustainability working group next week.

Action: Comments on alternative management of Council owned recreation grounds to Cllr Hilliard, luisa.hilliard@iow.gov.uk

Richard Grogan explained his new role in the Wildlife Trust in Head of Conservation for South Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. His area of responsibility would be extended to the Solent mainland coast and other sites in South Hampshire.

Jay Doyle said that a recent review of Forestry Commission functions in the region resulted in 16 commendations. The review group were impressed by the ecological work carried out in the region. The Strategic Plan of the Forest Estate is due to be published shortly. Through re-organisation, a team comprising a new Forester, a works supervisor and a wildlife ranger will be responsible for the Isle of Wight and adjacent mainland sites. This is a significant improvement in resource for the Island.

Mark Larter explained that NE are carrying out a review of SSSI units with a priority on Natura 2000 sites. He is hoping to devote time to this after work on Stewardship ceases in December. Mark would welcome input from members of the Steering Group to assist him in this work.

Dates of next meetings:

The following dates were agreed –

16th January; 13th March ; 10th July ; 9th October

All meeting are on a Thursday at 10.30 a.m.

The venue will be Enterprise House unless otherwise notified.