

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership



Minutes of the 49th Steering Group meeting
26th January 2012, 10.30 am Enterprise House, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield - Parks & Countryside Manager, IWC
Ian Boyd, Head of Environment, Natural Enterprise
Fiona Hanna – Lead Officer, AONB
Claire Hamilton, Fisheries & Biodiversity Officer, Environment Agency
Colin Pope – Senior Ecology Officer, IWC
Richard Black – Conservation Officer, RSPB
Mike Pittock, Forestry Commission
Belinda Walters – Regional Director, CLA
Debbie Tann, Chief Executive, Hants & IW Wildlife Trust
Richard Grogan, Head of Conservation, Hants & IW Wildlife Trust
Debbie Whitfield, Senior Biodiversity Officer, Hants & IW Wildlife Trust

Apologies: Tony Tutton, Helen Rawlinson, Jay Doyle, Les Street

SG12/01 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG12/02 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

Recorder's Conference

The Recorder's Conference is to take place on Saturday 28th January 2012 at Arreton Community Centre. All are welcome.

SG12/03 Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)

The Wildlife Trust have been successful in a funding bid to DEFRA to seek to develop a Local Nature Partnership covering Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and the marine environment. Debbie Tann attended the meeting and was able to explain the background behind the bid and the work to be done over the next six months in order to reach a point at which an application can be made to DEFRA for official recognition as an LNP. This process will involve getting agreement and support from a wide range of bodies and interest groups across the area. The co-ordination work will be carried out by the Trust in house by Debbie Whitfield working alongside the CX.

Debbie Tann envisaged the LNP operating as a high level strategic plan if it was to have any success in engaging LEPs and policy makers. There was general support in the steering group for a strategic and political LNP, provided that it did not constrain the day to day business of biodiversity which all agreed must continue despite the current vacuum of national guidance.

There would be a need over the next six months to seek to engage a wider audience and it was felt that, on the Island, this would be best facilitated by a joint Biodiversity / AONB partnership with discussions being led by mainland facilitators. Debbie agreed to set up an e-mail group of interested people so as to keep in touch as things develop.

SG12/04 Review of SINCS

CP explained the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) criteria and the role of the Group to form a view on proposed new, amended and deleted SINCS for recommendation to the IWC Planning Authority, in line with DEFRA guidance. Six candidate SINCS were discussed.

As a result of discussions, the Field of Hope, Ryde Cemetery and Merstone verges (with amendment) were recommended for SINC designation and an extension to Ninham Withybed was agreed. They all fulfilled the necessary SINC criteria for designation. It was agreed that a heavily managed open platform of land along The Undercliff be deleted from an existing SINC. Morton Reedbed was not recommended for SINC designation as it failed to qualify under SINC criteria.

SG12/05 Local Records Centre Report

The quarterly report for September to December was presented and will be circulated with the minutes. .

An MoA between NE and the IW Local Record Centre has been agreed for two years. Negotiations are underway for an MoA with EA for 2012/13.

SG12/06 Any Other Business

- **Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust** RG informed the group that the Catchment Sensitive Farming project is up and running again, with Lucy Temple returning to carry forwards the work. The Trust have leased 35ha of coastal plantation woodland, cleared of trees, from the Forestry Commission at Bouldnor where their education centre is now based. They have also acquired 18ha of floodplain wet grassland and reedbed at Sandown Levels. The land almost joins up with the Wight Nature Fund nature reserve. Purchase of the land was funded by a legacy and from members.
- **Natural Enterprise** IB alerted us to the fact that tree felling and woody debris installation is due to start in the next phase of the SITA Medina River Restoration Project.
- **Forestry Commission.** MP informed the group that the Waitrose wood-fuel plant will come into operation next week. Wood will be provided by a mainland contractor but using timber from the Island. The plant will require 2-3 tons of wood per year
- **AONB** FH reported that the HLF East Wight Landscape Partnership Project was progressing well. Jonathan Cox had been commissioned to develop a river catchments project and will be contacting many of the steering group members about this shortly. Fiona saw the project, if successful, as being a vehicle for delivery of many of the BOA objectives in the East Wight.
- **Environment Agency** CH reported that Peter Taylor had been recruited to the new post of Catchment Co-ordinator for the Isle of Wight. She hoped that he would be able to attend a future meeting of the partnership to explain the remit of his work.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 29th March 10.30am at Enterprise House: