

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the First Steering Group Meeting 13th September 1999 10.30 IWC
Seaclose Offices,
Newport

Present: Paul Airey, Policy and Environment Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Matthew Chatfield, Senior Countryside Officer, Isle of Wight
Council

Sarah Dawkins, Conservation Officer, RSPB
Rue Ekins, Conservation Officer, English Nature
Richard Grogan, Wight Wildlife Officer
Peter Keevil, Secretary, National Farmers' Union
Claire Lambert, Conservation Officer, English Nature
David Langford, Regional director, Country Landowners Association
Angela Mawle, Local Agenda 21 Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Anne Riley, Assistant Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Tony Tutton, Property Manager, National Trust
Debbie Wicks, Conservation Officer, Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust

Apologies: Tim Sykes, Conservation and Recreation Officer, Environment Agency

SG99/1. After welcome and introductions, Matthew Chatfield was elected
Chairman; IWC
offered to provide the secretariat for the steering group. Contributions from
other groups were
discussed. Representatives of mainland-based organisations gave a regional
and national
perspective to the process. FRCA/MAFF and Forestry Commission have indicated
a willingness
to be involved in areas directly relevant to their work. It was suggested
that they, and Island 2000
be kept informed of the BAP progress by means of Steering Group meeting
minutes.

SG99/2. Examples of progress with BAPs in areas known to Group members were
described; it
was strongly felt that the emphasis should be on action.

SG99/3. The progress with the plan to date was discussed. A list of partners
who have returned
forms to date was distributed. The draft habitat audit as circulated was
considered to be a good
summary of the Island's resource. The national and regional contexts need to
be added, as do
maps and an indication of habitat quality. A Species audit is underway in
consultation with the
Island's specialist recorders, and a data base is being built up in the IWC
Countryside Section.

SG99/4. Angela Mawle gave a brief summary of the Local Agenda 21 process to
date; the
steering group has gone through a similar process in defining the way forward.

Four themes have been identified: sustainable transport, sustainable economy, sustainable resource management (energy, water, waste) and environmental stewardship. There is a public launch event on Saturday 9th October, when people will be invited to participate in various ways. Biodiversity is seen as a subset of Environmental Stewardship.

SG99/5. Resource implications of the BAP

There was an emphasis on the need for action on the ground, rather than an excessively bureaucratic process which has occurred in some areas of the country. Funding is more likely to be available for practical action.

Concern was expressed by David Langford and Peter Keevil about the economic problems of farming, and the possible abandonment of land. Government priorities in the support of farming require radical overhaul for the long-term viability of farms, the sympathetic management of land, and the achievement of national BAP targets.

Production of BAP documents was discussed at some length. The aims of the documents, and their target audience need to be considered carefully. The cost of producing a full colour booklet of 60 pages is of the order of 7000- 14000, for a print run of 1000 (Unit cost 7-14). The printing of Action Plans as a follow-on exercise is envisaged to be a lower cost process. Hampshire's volume 1 cost in the order of 12000 (unit cost 12), and 1500 have been distributed. The cover price is 5. This was considered to be more expensive and less necessary for the Isle of Wight.

The habitat and species audits need to be available to the key partners, those setting targets and in public libraries. The final version of this information will be in the style of the SE Regional Audit. The unit cost of this document was of the order of 2.50.

The English Nature Natural Areas document could complement this Audit; it has not been widely promoted so far. However, the marine aspects of the Island are not covered in this booklet.

Communication with the general public is seen as extremely important and various methods were discussed, including the use of the Council's Wight Insight magazine and Countryside News, or a leaflet similar to that produced to publicise the Shoreline Management Plan.

It was agreed that the Audit should be a technical document with a restricted distribution; that there should be a document with wider public appeal, and that the

communication with the Partnership should be via a regular, but not necessarily frequent, newsletter

Funding contributions from Steering Group organisations were discussed. A number of people indicated that their budget rounds had already taken place for the next year, and only relatively small amounts of money are likely to be available. Long-term planning of the stages of the BAP and the projected funding would be helpful in assisting bids to be made to organisations.

SG99/6. Agreed action

a) Habitat audit: subgroup to meet on 11th October at IWC Offices, Seaclose to refine this document further. Revised document to be presented to next Steering Group meeting EN WW IWC

b) Produce and mail newsletter to Partnership and other potentially interested groups by 8th October 1999 Contents - IWC

1) Introducing the Steering Group -brief comments from each organisation relating to their involvement with biodiversity and experience /expertise. Copy to IWC by 24th September please (E-mail mchatfield@iwight.gov.uk).

2) List of current partners, with invitation for others to sign up.

3) News item about local action on the ground' relating to the conservation of wood calamint, undertaken by several organisations working in partnership.

Extra copies of the newsletter can be made available for the Local Agenda 21 launch on the following day.

c) Identify further groups who could make inputs to the habitat/species action plans All

d) Make enquiries about production/distribution of document aimed at the general public possibly via Wight Insight/Countryside News IWC

e) Circulate Natural Areas document EN

f) Draft timetable/costings for BAP production IWC

SG99/7 Any other business

Hampshire is to begin trialling a monitoring system related to the BAP.
Progress to be reported
to Steering Group

SG99/8 Date of next meeting: Thursday 9th December 1999 at 10.30 - 13.00
Seaclose Offices, Newport, IW



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