

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

Minutes of the 24th Steering Group meeting held on 6th September 2005, 10.30 a.m.
Seaclose Offices, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield, Countryside Manager, Isle of Wight Council
John Brownscombe, AONB Lead Officer
Nick Cooper, Defra
Andy Gordon, English Nature
Richard Grogan, Wight Wildlife
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Jackie Mellan, Environment Agency
Hugh Milner, Forestry Commission
Martin Munt, Dinosaur Isle
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Les Street, RSPB
Tony Tutton, National Trust

Apologies: David Langford, Country Land and Business Association
David Rumble, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

SG05/17 Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed

SG05/18 Matters arising from the minutes

MC outlined the future of the Countryside Section, under the reorganisation proposals of the IW Council. The Tree team will stay in Planning Services, under Development Control. Countryside management, the Estuaries project and Ecologists will move into a newly-formed Regeneration Service, with Planning Policy, the research and public awareness section of coastal management, and parks department. Countryside and Parks will come under one manager. The environment Group will be the largest group within the Regeneration Service. It is understood that the present resources associated with each section will transfer to the new service.

SG05/19 Isle of Wight Biological Information Centre

The report which was circulated with the agenda was discussed. The following points were raised for consideration:

- The long term viability and sustainability of the centre is paramount. There may be some start up funding but on-going commitment will be required. A Service Level Agreement with English Nature is considered premature. There are other models e.g. Cumbria Biological Data Network which may be more appropriate.
- The link to the NBN is crucial and criteria have already been set in relation to this.
- The group discussed the issue of joining up with HBIC. However no conclusion was reached. It is recognised that there needs to be an Island identity to ensure that there is community support and effective local networking.
- The geographical area to be covered could include the Solent.
- The title of the proposed service could be modified to include wider environmental interests.

- The centre needs to have an independence from other organisations and to carry out a range of activities in its own right, and in terms of its legal status, being an unincorporated association is probably the most appropriate.
- The Isle of Wight Council building is the only realistic option for accommodation, as it is already has much of the infrastructure in place, is accessible and people are able to visit. Some additional staffing, as well as volunteer input, is likely to be required.
- The centre would be likely to develop in an incremental way, and after 2 -3 years would be providing an improved service to that offered at the outset.
- Impartial interpretation of data could be a service offered, which would bring in extra income.
- The Agency request that the Council provide justification, through option appraisal, as to the way forward in establishing a Record Centre. This should include a comprehensive report to weigh up the benefits and disadvantages of being part of HBIC, that still retains an Island identity.

SG05/20 English Nature funding for Regional BAPs

Approximately £3500 for each of the next three years has been made available to the BAP partnership, and a memorandum of agreement relating to its use has been signed. The allocated money is to be spent on the items listed

a) Follow up to Northwood House event

The event was well received, and MC thanked members of the Steering Group for their input. To assist the integration of biodiversity into talks and presentations that members of the Steering Group are either already doing or may be asked to do, a power-point presentation is being prepared. This will contain the main points from the Community Booklet People for Nature, Nature for People with a series of images and it can be tailored for use with a variety of audiences.

b) Events and shows 2006

The Countryside Section and various other organisations have been at the Agricultural Show and Garlic Festival in previous years promoting biodiversity. However next year the Council will not be having a tent at either of these shows and other opportunities need to be sought, such as the Chale Show, Low Tide Day and Wolverton Garden Festival. These are more directed at local people and it may be possible to represent the wider partnership collectively.

MM reported that Dinosaur Isle is intending to organise a Victorian Science event over the October half term (next year is 150 years since the publication of the first Geological memoir). A meeting will be called in January/February for those who would like to contribute.

Marine Week - the Wildlife Trust will be doing a 'Bembridge on the Beach' event in the time period 5th - 13th August.

On Low tide Day, Dinosaur Isle and the National Trust are planning an event.

c) Development of biodiversity website

MC presented a prototype of web site being developed for the Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership, using material already produced and arranged in an attractive and easily accessible way. It is aimed at the general public but there will be links to more specialised information as well. Members offered various suggestions

relating to content, photographs and visual effects. When it is ready to go live, in the new year, steering group members will be informed.

Action: Please email suggestions, offers of material (text or visual) to MC by 21st December so that the web site can be progressed. All

d) Biodiversity Action Reporting System

AM demonstrated the Biodiversity Action Reporting System which is web-based and explained the progress which has been made to date. Information and targets have been entered for two plans to test the system and various issues identified, which are being resolved. It is intended that the remaining targets and habitat data will be entered in the next couple of months by an external contractor.

Contacts in those organisations which are nominated as lead partners will receive an automated e-mail requesting completion of information about the target. Many of the replies can be completed using drop-down lists which makes analysis on a nationwide scale possible. If completed fully, a picture of action for biodiversity should emerge - successes, constraints, strengths and weaknesses.

Each organisation present was given a list of targets for which they are nominated as lead as an illustration of what will be required. Once the system is set, up AM will contact everyone again to clarify what is required.

Action: Each organisation nominated as a lead partner for any action please send the name of the person who should be listed to complete the return, to AM by 16th December please (these have to be set up centrally). All

e) Revision of HAP targets

The HAPs and SAPs will need to be revised over the next two years, in line with national guidance, and to make our local targets SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time limited)

SG05/21 Any other business None

SG05/22 Date of next year's meetings

Thursday 30th March
Thursday 29th June
Thursday 28th September
Thursday 7th December

All meetings at 10.30 am Seaclose Offices Newport. Anyone having an item for the agenda please send it to AM 3 weeks before the meeting date to that it can be incorporated and any necessary papers circulated.