

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

Minutes of the 31st Steering Group meeting held on 13th September 2007, 10.30 a.m.
Seaclose Offices, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield, Parks and Countryside Manager, IWC
Rowan Adams, Landcare Officer
Ian Boyd, Island 2000 Trust
Andy Gordon, English Nature
Richard Grogan, Conservation Manager, Hants & I.W. Wildlife Trust
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Jackie Mellan, Environment Agency
Hugh Milner, Forestry Commission
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
David Rumble, Hants & I.W. Wildlife Trust
Luke Stevens, FWAG
Les Street, South-East Project Officer, RSPB
Tony Tutton, National Trust
Tracy Underwood, Island 2000 Trust

Apologies: David Langford, Country Land and Business Association
Nicky Rogers, AONB Planning Officer
Martin Munt, Dinosaur Isle, IWC

SG07/16 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG07/17 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

SG07/11 BAP newsletter: August issue ran under the heading of 'People for nature, nature for people' and had articles from The National Trust, Wight Nature Fund and the Histree Trail with the theme of organisations and people looking after the countryside. The December issue will feature the work of the Wildlife Trust Living Landscapes project and advance notice of the Recorders' Conference in February 2008

Action: Wildlife Trust to provide copy to AM by 29th October 2007

SG07/11 SEEBOF meeting: Arranged for 25th September 2007 *Update for written record of meeting - SEEBOF meeting cancelled 17th September, as only three of the Biodiversity Officers from the mainland were able to attend.*

SG07/11LRC Progress: a) Natural England core funding of £5000 should be available from the next financial year as an on-going commitment. A Memorandum of Agreement needs to be developed. This will then allow other organisations to put in funding.

b) The South East Local Records Centres are involved in a project to update the Grassland (acid, calcareous and neutral grassland) inventory for Natural England. This work improves the datasets by adding information to them according to defined criteria, and does not involve new survey work. Thames Valley ERC is co-ordinating the work. AM has attended a training session with the SELRC group.

Action: Develop Memorandum of Agreement CP/AG

SG07/14 Implementing the biodiversity duty. CP reported that a national template which can be modified for local use had not yet been received. He is attending the National BAP Conference at Exeter next week where the matter is an agenda item. AM has given a training session on designated sites to the Planning Services Customer Service Team. Planning Services is undergoing a review at the moment and it is possible that further training could form part of this.

Action: Proposals to be reported at next meeting

SG07/15 Buglife event: This event held on 8th August was well attended and the full report is now out.

SG07/15 Woodland Forum: The date for this has been changed to Monday 8th October at 7pm at The Countryman at Limerstone. The subject is wood fuel.

SG07/18 Revision of LBAP Habitat Action Plans

CP introduced this item, referring to the paper circulated with the agenda. After discussion it was agreed that this paper provided a way forward. AG suggested that a similar process needs to be applied to the LGAP.

Action: CP/AM to produce a draft Generic Habitat Action Plan and circulate in advance of the next meeting.

SG07/19 Revision of Maritime Cliffs and Slopes HAP

The revision of this plan sets the pattern for the revision of the other HAPs and once this is done it should make the rest of the revisions more streamlined. Some factual updating of the habitat descriptions is required, but the majority of the revision relates to the production of SMART targets.

A draft of the new targets circulated with the agenda was discussed and a revised document will be sent out by the end of October.

Action: Any further comment to be sent to AM by 16th November so a final document for adoption at the December meeting can be prepared.

SG07/20 Revision of Species Audit

CP referred to the paper circulated with the agenda. In the light of the new national BAP priority species list issued in June 2007 revision of the Isle of Wight Species Audit drawn up in 2000 has now begun. In future there will be two categories for inclusion - Species which are a National Priority and Species which are a Local Priority. Species which were previously on the National Long list may be redefined in one of these categories or removed from the audit.

Consultation with the local specialists will take place. Once the process is complete, the species audit will be re-issued as part of an LBAP ten year review, a 'glossy' public document including a number of species highlighted as flagship species. Success stories and potential problems will be included. The species selected will be spread over different taxonomic groups and habitats.

Action: Progress on species review to be reported at December meeting

SG07/21 Recorders' Conference

Arreton Village Hall has been booked for Saturday 2nd February 2008 from 1pm to 5pm. Suggestions for speakers were invited and included the following

Environment Agency Fisheries Department (JM)
Wildlife Trust Marine Team (DR)
Buglife (Andrew Whitehouse)
Glanville Fritillary monitoring
Farmland Bird surveys Dave Honeybun (IB)

Action: Those proposing speakers to approach the person to gain their agreement in principle and then notify CP so that a programme can be put together by 31st October 2007

SG07/22 Any other business

a) AG raised the issue of the role of the Steering Group in delivering HAPs and SAPs and how we focus resources for targeted delivery. It was agreed that this would be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Action: AG to produce a paper for discussion at SG meeting in December.

b) RA passed round a draft of a leaflet from Isle of Wight Land Care advertising free workshops and farm visits for comment/amendments. It will not be out in time to include the new date for the Woodland Forum. RA to give contact details of additional people to be circulated about the Woodland Forum meeting.

c) IB drew the meeting's attention to a series of meetings next May relating to the Coastal Environment.

d) HM raised concerns about the new amendments to the Habitats Regulations and their potential impact on woodland management. A document can be seen at www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies. There is an issue that habitat management could lead to harm to individuals of a species and therefore prosecution. The survey work required will be difficult and expensive and may deter land managers. However no management could result in poor quality habitat and is a greater threat to the population as a whole. Seminars are to be arranged to discuss the new regulations.

e) Royal Forestry Society has a southern and south eastern division meeting 12th - 16th May 2008 and will visit the Isle of Wight on one day looking at sites such as Newtown woods, Shanklin estate or Osborne

f) HM has negotiated an 80% Woodland Improvement Grant to promote Red Squirrels on the Isle of Wight. Small-leaved lime planting will also attract a 80% grant. It will be allocated on a first 'come first-served' basis. The work can be for enhancement or creation of rides, coppicing or creating access to coupes.

Habitat management for butterflies (especially Small pearl-bordered fritillaries) was raised and HM will take up the matter with the Forestry Commission.

g) JIGSAW meeting 20th September 12.45 pm to 4pm at Newchurch Village Hall between owners and the Steering Group. Monitoring of the project is to be discussed.

SG07/23 Date of next meeting

Thursday 6th December 2007 10.30 a.m. at **Enterprise House, St Cross Business Park, Newport**

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE. This is a larger room and there is no parking charge here.

Action: 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.