

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

Minutes of the 37th Steering Group meeting held on 22nd January 2009, 10.30 a.m.
Enterprise House, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield, Parks and Countryside Manager, IWC
Richard Grogan, Conservation Manager, Hants & I.W. Wildlife Trust
Jackie Kelly, Natural England
Joel Bateman, AONB Communications Officer
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, IWC
Jackie Mellan, Environment Agency
Mike Pittock, Forestry Commission
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, IWC
Les Street, South-East Project Officer, RSPB
Tina Williamson, Biodiversity Project Officer, IWC

Apologies: Tracy Underwood, Island 2000 Trust
David Langford, Country Land and Business Association
Nicky Rogers, AONB Planning Officer
Tony Tutton, National Trust

SG09/01 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG09/02 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

a) Water Vole SAP SG08/06b

RG reported that Graham Roberts would like to attend the next SG Meeting. 3rd Island-wide Water Vole survey on behalf of the Wildlife Trust has been delayed due to some data issues.

Environment Agency Wetlands Report

JM reported that results of the EA / IOW Wetlands SINC survey report has been produced, mapping habitat and condition of 25 SINC. Most were considered to lack appropriate management. The results of these surveys would be made available to organisations represented on the steering group.

River Medina assessment & improvements survey completed. Sites where obstructions could be removed, the original channel restored and variable flows introduced were identified. There would be discussions within the Agency as to the relative merits of funding implementation projects.

b) Opportunity Mapping SG08/26

S.E Regional Opportunity Area maps are now online at <http://sxbrc.org.uk/consultation/> and open for consultation until 28th Feb 09.

c) HAP review update SG08/28

Grazed HAPs have been revised and will shortly be posted on the WOW website; we are currently working on species list revisions for each. Wetland and Woodland HAPs are likely to be next under review. JM requested that we consult with her on the Wetland HAP in the new financial year.

d) BAP Objectives Statement SG08/27

CP reported that BAP statement is now in use and has been included in Core Strategy of the new Local Plan and the new AONB management plan.

e) Regrowth project SG08/29

MC has discussed the project with Jim Fawcett & Property Services and the principal has been well received. Awaiting a project business plan with costings from Alistair Chisholm.

SG09/02 LNR designation update

Steering Group discussed the list of candidate LNRs. Concern was raised as to whether Mill Copse should be included and the merits of the Medina Riverside park. It was agreed that the top four to

pursue are Golden Hill Park, Springhill Woods, Brading Down and Seaview Duver. Pan Mill Meadows was an important site to progress when the opportunity presented itself but was closely tied to planning matters.

TW reported on meeting with LNR rep from Natural England. Visits to Golden Hill Park, Springhill Woods, Brading Down & Fort Warden Fields and briefly outlined the application process. NE concluded that Golden Hill and Brading would be most suitable to put forward at this stage.

Action: TW to remove Mill Copse from the shortlist due to no current legal interest by the IW Council, re-order the list following the SG's discussion and begin working on Mgmt Plans for Brading Down and Golden Hill.

SG09/03 National Indicator for Biodiversity NI 197

Our revised Grazed HAPs have a target to bring 85% of sites into favourable condition by 2015. AM reported that to achieve this for SINC, 137 sites need to be brought into management schemes over the next six years.

There are currently 278 designated SINC. For the purposes of this exercise, some are being split into sub sites giving a total of 380 sites. A database is being developed alongside the GIS mapping following clarified guidance.

Currently data has only been obtained for 38% of the sites and at least 50% need to be in schemes. AM requested help from I2K, FC & NT on sites which they are involved with.

Action: AM to circulate a tailored list to each relevant organisation and ask that data be submitted by the end of Feb 09.

SG09/03 Proposed new SINC

21 proposed new SINC are being put forward for inclusion in the new Local Plan. These were brought to the Steering group for their consideration. Consultation with landowners has not yet taken place. A dialogue with landowners will be important and will refer landowners to the Wildlife Trust for management advice.

RG expressed concern over the SINC policy in the LDF believing that the policy contradicts itself making local sites vulnerable and will be pursuing this. This will be taken up by the Wildlife Trust in their response to the Local Plan consultation exercise.

Action: Comments on new SINC to AM. AM to update the SINC map accordingly.

SG09/04 SE Biodiversity Strategy

New South East Biodiversity Strategy is being launched at Westminster on Feb 12th 09 (SE version of the England strategy).

The 3 core elements of the strategy are: Opportunity Mapping; agreed regional targets for BAP habitats/species; and accountability for delivery of NI 197 targets.

The Strategy aims to sign up key statutory partners and NGOs. Local Authorities are being asked to sign up to the Strategy and CP will be attending a meeting to discuss the contribution which local authorities can make towards the delivery of the SE Strategy.

A website is being developed and a publication released to support the launch.

SG09/05 10th Anniversary of the BAP Steering Group

There was a discussion on ways of celebrating the anniversary this year by means of an event and a publication highlighting successes over the past ten years and lessons learnt. It was considered important that the publication reaches a wide audience and demonstrates how biodiversity is relevant to all sectors.

There was a discussion of suitable venues of a celebratory, half day event to be held September/October. Possibilities included; Wroxall Farm Barns, Bembridge Yacht Club, Riverside Centre, Medina Boat Trip. Needs to be well placed for maximum accessibility

Action: TW to approach SG for examples of successful projects and areas requiring further work for inclusion the forthcoming publication.

TW to investigate suitable venues and dates for a launch event.

SG09/06 Darwin200

IWC Parks & Countryside hoping to expand the current Wight Walks leaflet to highlight Darwin related events, his connection to the Island and features on IW biodiversity.

Currently waiting for cost of publication, any financial contributions from BAP SG members would be welcome.

Action: TW to co-ordinate dates of Darwin events and to post them on the official Darwin200 website <http://www.darwin200.org> and to contact JM with an idea of costs.

SG09/07 Recorder's Conference

3rd Annual Recorder's Conference is being held at Arreton Community Centre on Saturday 7th Feb 2pm-4:30pm.

Details of the event can be found at <http://wildonwight.co.uk/news/index.php/2009/01/19/isle-of-wight-recorders-conference>

SG09/08 Any other business

a) MP reported that a large scale conifer harvesting project is due to start in Parkhurst Forest next month. 7000 m³ of timber is to be felled and taken to the mainland.

Parts of the forest will be closed under CROW limiting public access, a press release will be issued detailing the works and benefits of the felling for wildlife.

b) JM reported that the EA were holding another Water Framework Development workshop based on the River Basin Management Plan on 2nd March in Newport.

Riverfest is planned again for May 9th as part of the IW Walking Festival launch.

c) SB reported Simon Goodenough's concerns about Wall Lizards as part of a Ventnor Botanic HLF application. The outcome of the bid is dependent upon support for Wall Lizards from Natural England, but currently NE are expressing concern about this aspect of the proposals.

Action: CP to liaise with Val Pollard (NE) on the matter.

d) Finest Landscapes publication next due out with the Easter edition of the County Press. TW requested submissions for articles from the SG by March 18th.

Actions: RG to submit copy on frog & toad survey results, MP to submit press release on Parkhurst Management works if underway.

e) JK reported that HLS money was high again for schemes in the next financial year with a push on NE to fund new applications and to bring people into HLS from expiring CSS schemes. Rachel Bosenthaite is the NE contact.

SG08/ Date of next meeting - Thursday 2nd April 10.30 am at Enterprise House, Newport

Action: Anyone having an item for the agenda please send it to TW 3 weeks before the meeting date to that it can be incorporated and any necessary papers circulated.