

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership



Minutes of the 44th Steering Group meeting
14th October 2010, 10.30 am Enterprise House, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield - Parks & Countryside Manager, IWC
Ian Boyd, Director - Natural Enterprise
Richard Grogan - Conservation Manager, Hants & I.W. Wildlife Trust
Claire Hamilton - Biodiversity Technical Officer, Environment Agency
Anne Marston - Assistant Ecology Officer, IWC
Colin Pope - Ecology Officer, IWC
Helen Rawlinson - Land Mgt & Conservation Advisor, Natural England
Tina Whitmore - Biodiversity Projects Officer, IWC
Tony Tutton - Property Manager, National Trust
Fiona Hanna - AONB Lead Officer
Richard Black - Conservation Officer, RSPB
Mike Pittock - Beat Forester, Forestry Commission
Les Street - South East Project Officer, RSPB

Apologies: Jay Doyle (FC)

Introductions: Richard Black, Conservation Officer, RSPB

SG10/25 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG10/26 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

a. 'Future Landscapes' IALE conference September 2010 SG010/02

CP reported that although his paper was printed as part of the proceedings, he did not attend the conference on the grounds that no concession was offered, or the option to attend just one of the days.

b. BOA reporting update

TW introduced the plan for gathering data from partners for the BOA reporting and proposes to visit partners to collect data between now and December. In discussion, it was considered that this would present an opportunity to collect info on work/projects which would provide a baseline, from which relevant information can be extracted for reporting on BOAs, BARS, AONB and other reporting requirements. There was some discussion on how best to proceed and it was decided that a 'project audit' strategy be adopted and a group get together to draw up a list of principles on which to report against.

Action: TW will circulate the refined BOA maps to all partners.

TW arrange a meeting to draw-up a list of reporting criteria/principles.

SG10/27 Wetland HAP draft discussion

CP thanked partners for their comments on the draft circulated last month. A discussion was held around whether targets/actions should be set for ponds/great crested newts, the decision was yes as RG can supply important areas for ponds/no. of new ponds data generated by the Ponds Project. Therefore, Ponds will have 'achieve', 'maintain' and 'restore' targets as per other wetland habitats in the HAP.

It was also agreed that a new action 'Maintain current extent of distribution of great crested newts' be added. The Pond Project will also help map legitimate sites/distribution.

CH asked how these targets/actions are monitored with CP stating that this is based on funding opportunities as and when they arise. CH was anxious to feed into the plan and said that she should have more time from now on for IW projects as a new EA officer has been employed. Therefore, circulation of the final version of the Wetland HAP will be delayed until CH has had an opportunity to incorporate her views on behalf of EA.

Action: CP to incorporate all comments into Wetland HAP and send round the final revision for the Steering Group to sign off

SG10/27 Future of the Biodiversity Projects Officer

Natural England's MOA, which provides a large part of the funding for the Biodiversity Projects Officer post comes to an end in March 2011. It is not known whether NE will be in a position to continue to support Biodiversity Officers; if they do, it is likely to be at a significantly lower level of funding.

It was generally agreed around the table that the Biodiversity Projects Officer post has added substantially to promoting and raising awareness of biodiversity locally and that it would be highly desirable to continue the post. We have sufficient funds in the Biodiversity Contingencies fund to extend the post for a further year but no further. There was discussion on how the post could be made more sustainable by bringing in funding from other sources. There is currently a proposal from Yarmouth Harbour Authority for a project to develop environmental awareness on the Western Yar.

It was agreed that the post be extended for one year and other appropriate funding opportunities be explored in order to supplement funding.

SG10/28 'An Invitation to Shape the Nature of England' consultation

CP thanked AONB for accommodating the Biodiversity Partnership as part of their AGM and for collaborating with us on a joint response. CP also encouraged all partners to attend the workshop for the [White Paper](#) being held at **1.30pm North Court, Shorwell Friday 22nd October**.

There was a discussion around farming/food production. DL reported that CLA have made a robust response and highlighted the main concern of duplication of reporting on targets and the importance of 'joined-up' thinking. Although we can suggest ways of doing things, at the end of the day it will come down to financial gains to the farmer – which may mean biodiversity suffers as a result.

In terms of the wider biodiversity remit and a broader IW response, it's likely the workshop will focus on the community/voluntary sector related questions as this will be most appropriate to those represented on the day.

FH cited the [Lawton Review](#) as a good resource and could help inform the discussion on the day, and that we should view this response as an opportunity to promote what we achieve here on the Island.

Action: ALL encouraged to complete the mini-survey linked to the consultation
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/nature-of-england>

SG10/29 Farmland Bird Survey Presentation

Les Street and Richard Grogan gave a joint presentation on the Farmland Bird Survey which has been in operation for the past nine years. Les covered trends in farmland bird species followed by Richard who presented the options available to landowners and the outcomes in the survey area.

Action: Copies of the presentations are available from Les les.street@rspb.org.uk

SG10/30 SINC's in the LDF

CP thanked the group for their responses to the SINC Guidelines document. This will be a background document to support the revised SINC's which will appear in Island Plan Core Strategy document going out to consultation on 29th October for 6 weeks. Full details of SINC's and their criteria will not appear in the document but there will be a link to further information on WOW website.

Action: TW to send round link once SINC docs. are online.

SG10/31 LRC Update

**please see report from AM attached*

Action: take some time to look at www.wildonwight.co.uk/lrc

Action: ALL date for your diaries **2011 Recorder's Conference – Saturday 5th February**

SG10/32 LNR Applications Update

Brading Down TW announced the official declaration date of Brading Down as the next new LNR as 1st March 2011. IW Council are in full support of the declaration and the next steps will be to contact neighbouring landowners and publicise intent to proceed publicly. New HLS agreement is in place and will mean that access and interpretation improvements can be made in time.

Golden Hill preparatory work is going well and a new Management Plan has been made and this has been sent to Natural England for comments. Two small grants for discrete projects have been applied for from WWLP for scrub removal and a community access/interpretation project.

Springhill Woods was progressing well, with a draft plan, local community involvement – Groundwork Solent had produced an impressive multi-use proposal for the East Cowes seafront green area. They were set to run a consultation, but Play Builder scheme was pulled and the work now seems to have faltered.

Enquiries received from Ryde Cemetery and Cowes High School design team both having aspirations of achieving LNR status in the future. IWC have provided advice and are being kept updated of progress. As and when these sites are ready, TW will bring the evidence to the Steering Group for appraisal.

TW has also been assisting with gathering information/preparation for HLS applications for all suitable IW Council Countryside Sites.

SG010/33 (IYB) 2010 Activities & Communication Update

TW reported on the NE Communications freeze and how it has impacted on her work and the frustrations experienced e.g. limiting publicity/promotional/events work and halting further development on the Wild on Wight website.

Wildlife Awards at the Wight in Bloom ceremony were well received Bronze – Afton Park, Silver VERA allotments, East Cowes, Gold - Northwood Primary. MC & TW attended awards, Matthew promoted IW Biodiversity and work of the partnership and presented the awards.

Fort Vic Foray Naturewatch species count activity went well with a final tally of 358 species on the day. For the first time we went live updating online throughout the day. It was good to be able to offer another 'BioBlitz' type of activity and hope to run more in the future.

Facebook presence for the Partnership. Our Facebook page links directly to the WOW website and news/events blog and is helping increase visitors to the website. If you would like your events/work promoted via the Facebook page, please send details to TW.

Action: ALL if you use Facebook find us on www.facebook.com/gowildonwight

SG10/34 Any Other Business

- **Munjac Deer** – CP reported that he had had several calls re: sightings of Munjac/small deer and asked the SG for their ideas on what if anything should be done if the sightings prove genuine. The general feeling was the sporadic and isolated reports individuals would prove too difficult to stalk/cull. The situation will have to be monitored, but it's not good news.

Grey Squirrels – CP reported a grey road casualty in Porchfield. This must be closely monitored and it is likely that a meeting of the IW Red Squirrel Group will need to be held to discuss implications. The England Red Squirrel Forum is to be reformed after a lapse of several years. An initial date for a meeting has been proposed in November.

- **IW Heathlands Booklet** – RG reported that the Heathlands week celebrations were successful and a new West Wight Heathland Trails booklet is now available and was circulated to those present. TW will put up a link to this on WOW website.
- **Wight Winter Walks** – TW thanked partners for financial support, new Winter edition is available.
- **In the Wild** - please have a think about stories/features to put forward. TW will contact everybody shortly for their stories/input.
- **Times on Saturday** – very positive article in September featuring the Histree Trails, WOW website and publicised IW Biodiversity in general encouraging visitors to explore the Island more widely to uncover more of its hidden, natural treasures.
- **OPAL hedgerow survey packs now available**
<http://www.opalexplornature.org/BiodiversitySurvey>
- **NHS Forest Initiative** - opportunity to partner the NHS in Community Tree Planting Schemes
www.nhsforest.org

Date of 2011 meetings

- Thursday 13th January
 - Thursday 7th April
 - Thursday 7th July
 - Thursday 13th October
- (all 10:30am Enterprise House, Newport)