

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership



Minutes of the 47th Steering Group meeting
14th July 2011, 10.30 am Enterprise House, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield - Parks & Countryside Manager, IWC
Belinda Walters – Regional Director, CLA
Claire Hamilton - Biodiversity Technical Officer, Environment Agency
Colin Pope – Senior Ecology Officer, IWC
Fiona Hanna – Lead Officer, AONB
Jay Doyle – Biodiversity Manager, SE District, Forestry Commission
Les Street – South-east Project Officer, RSPB
Mike Pittock - Beat Forester, Forestry Commission
Richard Black – Conservation Projects Officer, RSPB
Tony Tutton, Property Manager, National Trust

Apologies: Helen Rawlinson, Richard Grogan, Ian Boyd

SG11/17 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG11/18 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

a. Recorder's Conference

The Recorder's Conference will be taken over by the Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeological Society as the Countryside Section no longer has capacity to do this. However CP and AM will continue to be involved in organisation and we hope that members of the partnership will continue to support it as they have in the past. The date for the next meeting is the afternoon of Saturday 28th January 2012 at Arreton Community Centre.

b. Brading Down Bioblitz

The second Bioblitz event was held on 1st June on Brading Down, the Council's most recently designated Local Nature Reserve. This year, the event was kindly organised by the AONB team. It was well attended by families and local people. Thanks to all partners who gave up their time in helping to make the day a great success. Over 250 people attended and a total of 330 species were recorded.

FH said that the AONB unit would be prepared to organise a similar event in 2012. There was some discussion on possible venues.

c. Local Record Centre update

Anne Marston is now working part time and it is no longer possible to fulfil all of our commitments. However, MOAs have been agreed with EA and are under discussion with NE and the funding from these should enable us to fulfil our commitments to these bodies. We will need to renegotiate the terms of our MOA with the Wildlife Trust if we are to be able to provide the service they require.

A quarterly report to cover the period April – June 2011 is circulated with these minutes.

SG11/19 Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and the future direction of the Biodiversity Partnership

MC introduced this topic, which is one of the main proposals coming out from the recently published Natural Environment White Paper. Richard Lemon, Senior Adviser Landscape Scale Delivery (South) had been due to attend the meeting but had been called away to attend a meeting in London to discuss LNPs with Wildlife Trust chief executives. He provided background notes to aid our deliberations.

There was a wide ranging discussion around the role and purpose of LNP's and how they were expected to be set up and run effectively. A great deal of uncertainty remains around this issue and no final decisions were met.

It is understood that the PUSH group (which now includes the Isle of Wight) are considering applying for a LNP. Richard Grogan (HIWWT) sent a proposal that the Environment Forum take over the role of a Local Nature Partnership. A meeting on the Environment Forum has been arranged for 20th July at which some members of the biodiversity steering group would be attending. Richard Lemon will also be at that meeting.

There was a discussion around how the Local Nature Partnership could be made to work for biodiversity, if the Environment Forum model goes forwards. It was proposed that the Biodiversity Steering Group should be circulated with the terms of reference of any proposed LNP for comment and consideration, prior to deciding whether the Partnership wishes to support the LNP.

Action: MC/CP to circulate Terms of Reference of LNP for feedback on behalf of the Biodiversity Steering Group

Action: MC/CP to keep Steering Group informed of developments re LNP. If required, a special meeting of the Group may need to be called.

It was agreed that the Biodiversity Partnership Steering Group was working well and should continue in its current form for the foreseeable future.

SG11/20 Review of SINC's

The Steering Group has the role, under DEFRA guidance, for reviewing SINC's. This is a new role and it is proposed that it happens annually. Through the Group, SINC's have already been reviewed and the recommendations have been put forwards for inclusion in the Local Authority's Local Plan. Since then, a few sites have been challenged and others have been proposed.

It is suggested and agreed that, at the first Steering Group meeting in 2012, all proposed changes to SINC's should be considered for recommendation to the Planning Authority.

Action: CP to seek advice regarding the responsibilities and liabilities of the Steering Group in making these recommendations.

Additional information: Initial discussions with Planning Policy suggest that the approach is likely to be that the Steering Group will make recommendations to IWC for adoption/deletion/amendment of SINC's.

SG11/21 The Biodiversity National Indicator

The National Indicator Set (which included NI197 Biodiversity – management of local wildlife sites) has been superseded by a Single Data List which requires local authorities to report on a greatly reduced number of indicators. Biodiversity remains in the Single Data List but, due to resource limitations, we are no longer in a position to report on this.

DEFRA have said that there is no statutory duty to report on the biodiversity indicator but relevant local authorities are nevertheless expected to do so.

It was accepted that, unless additional funds become available, it will no longer be possible for the Countryside Section to report on the Biodiversity Indicator.

SG11/22 Project ideas

There was a discussion on possible projects coming forwards, following a request by Tim Sykes (EA) for potential projects for the Solent Forum Nature Conservation Group to consider.

FH informed the group that she is seeking to apply for a Landscape Partnership Project for the East Wight and, if successful, would be looking for suitable projects. A number of potential projects were discussed.

Action: FH to keep the Group informed of developments re Landscape Partnership Project bid.

SG11/23 Any Other Business

- **Forestry Commission.** JD informed the group that funding had been confirmed for this year to maintain SSSI sites in favourable condition. He also made reference to the Million Ponds Project which was working well.
- **Japanese Knotweed** CH referred to the need to raise public understanding of the need to treat Japanese knotweed correctly. She was concerned that it may be being disseminated by green waste composting. MC said that he has been assured by Island Waste that this was not the case. TT said that he believed the Japanese knotweed was increasing and spreading.
- **RSPB** RB referred to the negotiations with a developer to bring forward the Marsh Farm landfill site, whereby two thirds of the site would go to the RSPB as an accessible addition to their reserve and one third would be developed as holiday lodges. A planning application is expected late summer. This would need to address impacts upon adjoining protected sites but has the potential to considerably enhance the RSPB reserve for people and wildlife if managed correctly.
- **Chines project** TT commented favourably on the new Island Chines website but requested that links to it from Wild on Wight and AONB websites could be provided.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 13th October, 10.30am at Enterprise House