

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

Minutes of the 33rd Steering Group meeting held on 22nd January 2008, 10.30 a.m.
Seaclose Offices, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield, Parks and Countryside Manager, IWC
Sam Buck, 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
Nicky Rogers, AONB Planning Officer
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Les Street, South-East Project Officer, RSPB
Tracy Underwood, Island 2000 Trust

Apologies: Rowan Adams, Landcare Officer
Ian Boyd, Island 2000 Trust
David Langford, Country Land and Business Association
Hugh Milner, Forestry Commission
Luke Stevens, FWAG

SG08/01 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG08/02 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

SG07/11 BAP newsletter: there is a major article on soft cliffs but other snippets of news would be welcome. It was suggested that there could be a short report on the Recorders' Conference.

Action : Please send any more content to AM by 22nd February 2008.

SG07/14 Eco-Island initiative

There was discussion on how the biodiversity element of the community strategy could be furthered. RG is involved in the Local Strategic Partnership and AG is involved via the Local Development Framework, which are running in parallel. IW Council Parks and Countryside section will work within the Council, particularly through the local authorities' biodiversity duty.

Individuals and organisations were encouraged to make their views on the Council's 'Eco Island' initiative heard through the public consultation exercise.

SG07/19 Revision of Maritime Cliffs and Slopes HAP

This HAP has now been finalised. The species associated with this habitat will be revised in due course.

SG07/28 Recorders' Conference

Invitations have now been sent out for the event on Saturday 2nd February. There will be presentations from Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust and Medina Valley Centre.

SG08/03 Generic Habitat Action Plan

A further draft has been circulated. JM submitted some written comments on the text which will be incorporated before the final draft is circulated.

The actions were discussed at length. The actions document will be revised in the light of these discussions and circulated with the minutes for final comments.

Action: Documents to be revised in the light of discussion and circulated AM

Action: Any further comments to be submitted by 29th February 2008 ALL

SG08/04 Role of BAP Steering Group in adding value to biodiversity projects by collaborative working

Luke Stevens, who was unable to attend the meeting, sent an email regarding the North Downs landscape scale project which will be forwarded with the minutes.

RG described current proposals and possible opportunities on the Island.

- a) West Wight Landscape Partnership – ‘Through the eye of the Needles’. The area involved covers six parishes to the west of the Island. IW Council are the lead and the management board includes representatives from the parish councils, AONB, Natural England, Forestry Commission, and Wildlife Trust. A £2.5 million bid was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund and 17 different projects were included such as interpretation, heathland restoration, river wardens. The greenway element of the scheme is in limbo as various difficulties have been encountered. If successful, there would be a grant scheme available for small projects which will have an administrator. There would be no funding for an advice element in these schemes.
- b) Island 2000 Trust is applying to the Tubney Charitable Trust for funding for a project in the Eastern Yar catchment (project area 9625 ha). This would particularly target SINC, which collectively contain as much semi-natural habitat (812 ha) as the SSSIs in the area (822 ha); the Tubney Trust will not fund work on SSSIs. The work would consist of land management advice followed by practical land management. The habitats include 286 ha of wetlands, 290ha of grassland and 181 ha of woodland and 56ha of cliff and intertidal.
- c) The parts of the Island covered by neither of these schemes are the Medina catchment south of Newport and the north and north-east Wight. In these areas there are many woodland SINC and there may be the potential to develop a woodland project.
- d) A project along the Military Road relating to supplementary feeding of farmland birds is being developed by the Wildlife Trust, Island 2000 and RSPB.

It is important that activities are co-ordinated and not overlapping; clear aims and objectives are needed.

AG outlined the features of the phase 2 HLS targeting. Single interest features are being identified: biodiversity, landscape, resource protection, access and historic environment. These features are being combined to produce a multi-objective priority map to identify areas of high value and high risk where multiple outcomes can be delivered. A spatially based targeting scheme will be the result. 80% of the money will be available for these areas and 20% will be available for smaller thematic schemes where there are high priority features outside the high value/risk target areas. On the Island, the AONB and Eastern Yar are scoring highly so HLS money should be available, and this could fit in with other schemes.

Good HLS schemes are still getting through but in future applications may be by written invitation only.

SG08/05 Any other business

a) Once the generic action plan has been agreed, a timetable is needed for the revision of the other HAPs. Prior to this, agreeing overall targets for enhancement, restoration and re-creation, and specific areas for inclusion would be a helpful step. This will be a major agenda item for the next Steering Group meeting. This will take place in the Seaclose offices as the GIS needs to be used and assistance with network access is available there. It was suggested that a sub group should meet before this to look at the data available.

Action: AM to liaise with AG RG CP to set up meeting

b) Graham Roberts (SE otters & rivers project officer for the Wildlife Trust) will be invited to talk about an Isle of Wight Water Vole Species Action Plan at the next Steering Group meeting. This will be relevant to wetland management on the Island generally.

c) Natural England has allocated money to develop the Wild on Wight website further (by 31st March). A document (which will be circulated with the minutes) outlining possible modifications has been produced and feedback is requested.

Action: All feedback on this document to be sent to AM by 15th February 2008

d) AG advised that Natural England is looking at further efficiency savings and is under considerable budgetary pressure. There are expected to be significant redundancies.

SG08/06 Date of next meeting

Thursday April 3rd 10.30 a.m. at **Seaclose Offices**

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE

Other meetings next year are at Enterprise House at 10.30 am on

Thursday July 3rd

Thursday October 23rd

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.