

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Partnership



Minutes of the 42nd Steering Group meeting
25th March 2010, 10.30 am Enterprise House, Newport

Present: Matthew Chatfield, Parks and Countryside Manager, IWC
Joel Bateman, AONB Communications Officer
Ian Boyd, Director, Island 2000 Trust
Richard Grogan, Conservation Manager, Hants & I.W. Wildlife Trust
Claire Hamilton, Biodiversity Technical Officer, Environment Agency
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, IWC
Mike Pittock, Isle of Wight officer, Forestry Commission
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, IWC
Helen Rawlinson, Land Mgt & Conservation Advisor, Natural England
Les Street, South-East Project Officer, RSPB
Tina Whitmore, Biodiversity Projects Officer, IWC

Apologies: Jay Doyle (FC), David Langford (CLA), Tony Tutton (NT), Mark Buckett (AONB)

SG10/09 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

SG10/10 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

a. 'Future Landscapes' IALE conference to be held in Brighton September 2010 SG010/02

TW thanked RG for his work on the first draft and then all for input into our abstract submitted in February. Our abstract was successful and we have been invited to make a presentation within the category 'Assessing vulnerability and resilience'. CP would like to represent the partnership at the conference.

Action: CP will work on a paper and circulate for comments before May 14th

b. BAP newsletter input SG10/02c.

TW reported that 'In the Wild' the new e-newsletter from the partnership has now been circulated as a pdf. Estimated 1000 have had the opportunity to read the newsletter. It is also available on WOW. Next issue is planned for late summer Autumn and TW will require content from partners.

Action: ALL to put forward suggestions for new recipients in the coming months

SG10/11 Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Areas (IBDAs)

IBDAs will enable delivery of biodiversity through landscape-scale projects >10,000ha and drive BAP habitat restoration and expansion. IBDAs have been identified where the effort put in will mean the biggest return for biodiversity.

BIGs (Biodiversity Implementation Groups) have now proposed seven candidate IBDAs (Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Areas) in the SE region which now has to be narrowed down to three which will then be progressed 2010-15. CP was planning to attend the regional workshop on 26th March, but the Island was not selected as a candidate area, however the Island fared well having three key areas identified – Woodland, Farmland (including chalk grassland), coastal and also Marine.

RG reported the Wildlife Trust have concerns that the Island has not been included and will be attending the IBDA workshop on 26th March to express these.

CP reported that Tom Butterworth says that the first round of IBDAs identified will be terrestrial and therefore the Island doesn't have sufficient expanses to be included. Marine and coastal IBDAs will follow and here the IW will be a strong contender and TB will support inclusion of the IW.

SG10/12 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) priorities and planning

We shall now have to report annually on what's been happening in our BOAs each December. The first step has been to gather data and refine our maps – this should help us identify the gaps/opportunities where there are currently no schemes in place.

TW presented two BOA map examples that have been refined and updated to include all management data that is currently available (i.e. site designations, woodland and stewardship grants) and also an accompanying list of everything we know including other projects and potential sources of funding. The SG agreed that this was a useful tool in identifying areas with potential and for targeting work.

AM will need to collect data from the SG Sept/Oct for the December annual BOA reporting. A streamlined spreadsheet will be circulated with drop downs. TW will then extract the data and present it to NE.

RG said that this reporting will be 'snapshotting' and the Trust's reports won't necessarily coincide with the December deadline.

BOAs are now a requirement of many funding applications, particular on a national level and for projects which are working on a landscape-scale. IB reported that Newport Rivers Group and Environment Agency have jointly submitted a bid to SITA for £145K for preparatory work for restoration and conservation of BAP species (Eels and Brown/Sea Trout). The bid has successfully made it through the first stage and the regional SITA officer will be visiting the site on April 13th.

Action: TW to find out if monitoring/surveying work counts in the BOAs.

Action: IWC to continue refining all BOA maps and compile as a resource for the Steering Group.

Action: ALL to feedback on maps with updated data on new schemes and projects.

SG10/13 Partnership sign-up to the South East Biodiversity Strategy

The letter of invitation to sign-up was received and circulated prior to the meeting. This followed on from Tom Butterworth's presentation at the January BAP meeting. The six criteria for signing up were discussed.

RG was concerned that the criteria splits the delivery of biodiversity and asked whether it would take us away from delivering work on the ground as not all key species and habitats are in the BOAs.

It was agreed that BOAs are a mechanism to deliver the bulk of priority habitats and that the partnership should sign-up and support the strategy and decided that the 6 criteria do not ask for anything that isn't already being done already.

Also circulated during the meeting was the joint letter from NE, EA and FC stating their commitment to the sign-up and what is required from their respective regional partnerships to deliver this. MP had not seen the letter but said that all the criteria presented was already being carried out by the FC and would hope that the partnership would agree with ratify this in writing.

Action: MC to reply to the letter of invite on behalf of the Partnership in support of signing-up and also to reply to the second letter stating the objectives of NE, EA and FC

SG010/14 Local Record Centre latest report

Mobilisation of species data: the IW LRC are currently developing queries for the mobilisation of species data with IWNHAS, BSBI, Adam Wright's records (16,000 insect records) and bat and water vole GIS records from 2008 survey.

Habitat data: the OS mapping base has recently changed to Mastermap and Geodata at Southampton University are currently updating our habitat framework. This new tool is currently being tested in Hampshire and will enable data to be attached to polygons.

Wetland Habitat inventory: Data is currently being updated by AM for the NE Southeast inventory project.

NI 197: a new GIS officer has joined the IWC and user group meetings are frequently being held. NI 197 data is being incorporated in the Green Infrastructure and the PFI strategies.

CP reported that the IW LRC Memorandum of Agreement with Natural England commits us to being up and running by April 1st. Data exchange agreements with EA, WT and Butterfly Conservation are being negotiated. Technical issues with the IWNHAS should be resolved shortly.

CH asked if there was to be a launch of the IW LRC and whether the public will be encouraged to submit their records and sightings. It was agreed that some publicity would be a good idea and the IW LRC would hope to offer a facility to the public in the future once more established.

A written report is attached FYI please see * 'LRC report October 2009-March 2010'

Action: AM to put together a press release highlighting the launch of the IW LRC and will inform the SG when the new IW LRC section goes live on the WOW website

Annual Recorders Conference: was a success on 6th February with 53 attendees, thanks to those who helped and contributed displays. There was lots of positive feedback and we already have several ideas/volunteers for presentations in 2011.

LRC work plan: AM presented the IW LRC work plan (*please refer to the attachment 'LRC Work programme 2010) which needs to be agreed by the Steering Group.

Action: ALL Comments on IWLRC Proposed Work Plan 2010-2011 to AM by 1st May 2010.

SG010/15 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) 2010

TW has secured some funding from Natural England for our p'ship events and will go towards Go Wild in the Woods, the IW Photography exhibition costs and promotion of IYB 2010 at the Fort Victoria Foray.

IW Photographer of the Year competition: the Go Wild on Wight category is on show at Freshwater Library throughout May and at Newport Minster in Newport – please do check it our if you can as the images are stunning.

TW said that the 25 prints are portable and can be shown elsewhere at other events. CH volunteered to look into exhibition sites on the mainland and IB suggested the Ferry operators – both location would raise the profile of IW biodiversity. *please see attached poster and display if you are able.

Action: CH to contact mainland venue.

Action: IB to contact Wightlink re: space at mainland ferry terminals

Wight Summer Walks booklet: TW thanked partners who have supported this edition financially and to all for contributing their events to the listings. The IYB logo has been used to badge certain events which highlight specific elements of the Island's biodiversity.

Go Wild in the Woods: partnership event Wednesday June 2nd at Parkhurst. TW updated the SG on developments and presented a list of proposed activities/facilitators asked.

The BioBlitz element of the day was also introduced. A "BioBlitz" is a large scale event that engages large numbers of people with biodiversity, inviting them to get directly involved in surveying and monitoring see www.bioblitzuk.org.uk This will be the Island's first BioBlitz. The Eco-Challenger will form the hub on the day with records being collated here.

TW asked for assistance with planning and co-ordination of the day and it was agreed that a working group would be the ideal solution. A date was set to meet.

Action: MP, JB, IB, CP, MC, TW (RG suggested Kathy Grogan) to Thursday 8th April, 10.30 am – 12 noon at Enterprise House

Action: TW will also invite Medina Valley Centre and Bob Edney

Wight in Bloom update: TW has been working with IWC Parks and suggested that the p'ship support a Gold, Silver & Bronze Wildlife Award. The Wight in Bloom competition judges will select appropriate entries and put them forward for the award. The p'ship could then supply a representative to assess the selected entries (this would be sometime in June). It was agreed that Nick Webb, IW Countryside Ranger would be an ideal candidate for judging. We would also need a representative to present the Wildlife Award at the Awards Ceremony.

Action: TW to attend Wight in Bloom steering group meeting 30th March. Also to liaise with Bob Edney and Nick Webb re: judging Wildlife Award

Action: IB to supply 3 black poplars as part of the prizes

Action: ALL to consider if they are able to contribute prizes

Countryside 2010

TW has submitted events to www.countryside2010.org.uk 29th May – 13th June (with permission from walks leaders). This is a SE England initiative for a 2 week showcase of countryside based activities & events to get folk out and about. TW will also upload 'Go Wild in the Woods' details to the above website.

SG10/14 NI 197 annual reporting, information leaflet and SINC condition project

AM reported that there has been a good increase in the number of sites in documented management from 54% last year to 60% this year.

Some new NI 197 leaflets received from SE Biodiversity Forum were distributed. More copies are available from Tom Butterworth if required.

AM briefly ran through the NI 197 delivery plan for 2010 *please refer to attachment 'NI 197 Report to Steering Group March 2010' and make comments where required.

Action: AM to circulate year end report for 2009/10 and delivery plan for 20010/11

SINC condition project: RG reported that the WT are employing an Undergraduate from July 14th for 48 weeks to look at the condition of SINCS under NI 197. The work will be carried out geographically from West to East rather than by habitat. This report should generate an idea of how these sites are faring, and should tie in with NE's proposal of targeting SINCs once all SSSIs achieve favourable condition.

SG10/08 Any other business

- IW Beekeepers TW reported that the IW Beekeeping Association are looking for some land on which to house an apiary for training up new Beekeepers. MP suggested the education field in Parkhurst and a location in Bouldnor. IB said that he had mentioned the idea to the Foss' – the landowners at Fairlee which would tie in with the 'greening-up' of the IW festival.

Action: TW to re-contact beekeepers to see if they are still looking, then contact Nigel Leppard to enquire about Parkhurst field.

- Funding for red squirrel/dormouse survey RG reported that funding has been secured for a new survey and will begin in October. Currently awaiting to appoint a contractor. This will be the 4th round of the red squirrel/dormouse survey and the data will be available in a format which can be digitised.

- Marine Survey work data RG highlighted the recent press release on NE beginning to survey the seabed off the IW south coast and asked whether the data will be available. TW reported that IWC have been incontact with NE and they have agreed to supply the data when complete. The press release can also be seen in the WOW news section <http://wildenwright.co.uk/news/index.php/2010/02/15/multibeam-echo-sounder-jpg>

- AONB environmental guidance for PFI MC thanked AONB for agreeing to produce Environmental Guidance for the PFI Highways engineers and also hopes this resource will be incorporated into the local plan.

- Farmland Breeding Birds presentation LS and RG offered to deliver a presentation at our Oct BAP meeting on the Farmland Breeding Birds survey data.

Date of next meeting Thursday 1st July 10.30am at Enterprise House