

UK Urban Ecology Forum (UKUEF)

Draft Minutes of the Zoom video-conference meeting of Thursday April 23rd 2020 at 11.00

Participating

John Box (JB)	Unaffiliated
Ian Douglas (ID)	University of Manchester
Pete Frost (PF)	Natural Resources Wales
David Haley (DH)	Artist and Educator
Jane Houghton (JHou)	Natural England
Nigel Lawson (NL) (Hon. Sec.)	University of Manchester
Sarah Lindley (SL)	University of Manchester
Alison Millward (AM)	Alison Millward Associates
Kerry Morrison (KM)	Artist and Ecologist
Joe Ravetz (JR)	University of Manchester
Alan Scott (AS)	Complete Ecology
Richard Scott (RS) (Chair)	National Wildflower Centre/Eden Project
Joanne Tippett (JT)	University of Manchester
Tim Webb (TW)	RSPB
Niall Williams (NW)	Landscape artist and urban designer

Apologies

Dave Barlow, Mark Champion, David Goode, John Handley, Paul Nolan, Terry Robinson, Danielle Sinnett.

Opening remarks by the Chair

RS advised that the Vice Chair Judy Ling Wong (JLW) had submitted her resignation from UKUEF on April 19th which has been accepted with regret.

In her resignation letter JLW said that at 70 years old she felt that her energy was being drained but that the basis for international work is now in place and hoped that the legacy of her work with the UN Habitat and at WUF10 would continue to benefit the Forum. She now felt that it is crucial for her to focus on initiatives where she could make her fullest contribution to society and thus the need to withdraw from the Forum. She thanked the Forum for the learning and experience that she had gained over the years as a member of the UK Urban Ecology Forum and stated her continuing commitment to promote the urban ecology approach whenever there is opportunity within her future work. She wished the Forum well.

Action:

- **ID to draft a formal response to, and appreciation of, JLW on behalf of the Forum**

Minutes of teleconference meeting held January 14th 2020.

The minutes were accepted

Actions from the tele-conference held on January 14th 2020

- Short statement on General Data Protection Regulations for the Forum's web site
- UN-Habitat Assembly GSF and Routledge Handbook Launch Event

are carried forward.

All other actions have either been dealt with or feature below.

WUF10 Abu Dhabi Feb. 8-13 2020

RS, TW and NW spoke enthusiastically of their experiences in what they described as an extraordinary gathering and of the many good contacts they made on behalf of UKUEF. They urged members to refer to the many documents which have been circulated as well as to those on the Forum's web site.

UN-Habitat Assembly GSF and Routledge Handbook launch event

This was deferred.

COP 26 and possible engagement with DFID

Dealt with under work programme

Work Programme

RS reported on the new five theme work programme and its time-table resulting from the core group meeting in Manchester March 2nd 2020. ID proposed that all coordinators (DH, ID, SL and RS) report on their initial ideas for taking the programme forward within one month.

AM, supported by DH and AS pointed out the new opportunities for UKUEF in how to offer positive solutions promoting urban ecology given the current and future changes as a result of the coronavirus pandemic; including our need to network and to get the word out.

AM suggested talking to Defra about how the Forum can offer solutions. ID and SL spoke of the need for research into the use of parks and urban green and blue spaces as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. JR stressed the need to do something quickly: all the Handbook on Urban Ecology's contributing authors could contribute on-line one-page reports with pictures.

KM pointed out problems with the Forum's web site and the need to set up an on-line platform on which we can exchange and disseminate ideas.

Actions:

- **DH, ID, SL and RS to produce ideas for each of the work package themes in advance of the May 2020 meeting.**

- **ID to provide a template and to coordinate 100 word pamphlets on present and future impacts and opportunities arising from the pandemic on urban ecology.**

Status of UKUEF (possible transfer from Unincorporated Organisation to Charity)

RS reported that the voting process on whether the Forum should seek to change its status to a charity produced a hung vote and clearly indicated that there was no mandate to take this forward without further research and consideration. In discussion the need for clarity on potential auditing expenses; the need for a legal opinion on member's potential liabilities and the need for UKUEF to now have suitable governance documentation for an international audience was raised. In summary it was felt that the principal issues are the need for a constitution, the to raise money and the need to clarify member's liabilities. It was pointed out that the Forum had progressed 95% of the way towards an Articles and Memorandum of Association five years ago. The pathway toward seems to a Community Interest Company (CIC) initially and a charity later. JB and TW indicated their willingness to be involved in a working group to investigate these issues.

Action:

- **RS to send out a further document on this issue and to seek appropriate legal advice as soon as possible.**

Treasurer's report and financial planning

NL reported that the current net bank balance was only £193 but that this would soon be augmented by the £2000 donation from NE towards attendance at WUF 10 and JH confirmed that this payment is imminent. The Forum still owes about £660 to WUF 10 attendees. Thereafter the Forum's funds will amount to approximately £1530.

Web site

KM had pointed out inadequacies with the Forum's web site.

NL reported that in May 2018 Graham Bowden had provided the Forum with a proposal to update the web site but this had continuously been shelved.

Action:

- **NL to liaise with TW on modernization of the site.**

UKUEF committees and secretariat

NL again informed the meeting that due to advancing age and inabilities the Forum should be seeking to replace him as Secretary. Meanwhile he confirmed his willingness to continue to assist RS in general and the Forum in particular in whatever capacity this might be for as long as he is able and reiterated his personal appreciation of being involved with the Forum.

Action:

- **To seek a younger person to undertake secretarial duties.**

Membership

Blanche Cameron regretfully resigned from UKUEF due to additional work related pressures caused by her added involvement with coronavirus pandemic related emergency committees at UCL. She stated her desire to continue to follow the Forum via the web site and to hopefully reconnect with the Forum in the future.

JB, who acknowledged the valuable assistance of JT, KM and RS, had circulated the latest version of his revised criteria for membership of UKUEF which was accepted.

- **Action:**
- **NL to ensure that the updated criteria for membership is put on the Forum's web site**

Awards

In abeyance and not to be included on future agendas.

Any other business

JH reported that NE have set up a core group to provide feedback on the impacts of Covid-19 on open spaces and on what governmental guidance might be needed, includes mapping which areas are most in need of access to green spaces and gardens. The group meet via weekly teleconferencing and JH invited UKUEF representation and the possible use of Forum members as representatives of other organisations. She requested that people contact her with details of their involvement with other groups.

AS, RS and DH indicated their willingness to participate in the teleconferences on behalf of UKUEF.

Date of next meeting(s)

Action:

- **NL to doodle poll member's preference to either May 15th, 18th, 19th or 20th at 11.00am**