

UK Urban Ecology Forum

Minutes of the meeting held at University of Manchester Tuesday September 11th 2018

Present

John Box (JB)	Independent Consultant
Mark Champion (MC)	Lancashire Wildlife Trust
Ian Douglas (ID)	University of Manchester
Pete Frost (PF)	Natural Resources Wales
Nick Grayson (NG)	Birmingham City Council
David Haley (DH)	Artist and Educator
Philip James (PJ)	University of Salford
Sarah Lindley (SL)	University of Manchester
Alison Millward (AM)	Independent Consultant
Kerry Morrison (KM)	Artist and Ecologist
Joe Ravetz (JR)	University of Manchester
Richard Scott (RS) (Chair)	Eden Project
Joanne Tippett (JT)	University of Manchester
Judy Long Wong CBE (JLW)	BEN

Apologies

Dave Barlow, Nick Grayson, Jane Houghton, Nigel Lawson, Terry Robinson and Alan Scott

Minutes of meeting held May 22nd 2018

The minutes were accepted

Link to UN-Habitat Urban Agenda

RS explained that the application for affiliation would be considered. In the meantime he would like details of members' activities in relation to urban ecology to include in a summary statement about the Forum to be sent to UN Habitat.

It was agreed to consider a possible link to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) <https://www.ipbes.net>

Action:

Members of the Forum to send details of activities to Richard Scott. Individuals should send examples of work, on single sheet or 2 sides A4 to RS [rscott@EdenProject.com] by October 14th for a fully representative portfolio of the Urban Forum.

Presentations:

1. London National Park City (Judy Long Wong)

London National Park City departs from the traditional National Park model in aspiring to pay equal attention to outstanding nature and the built environment. A key theme is that being a National Park City is about our identity. Living in nature as part of urban culture is compelling – National Park City is a setting for life – it offers a way of life and a way of being and acting. A declaration event for the World's first National Park City (London) will be held in the summer of 2019. A National Park City Foundation has been established and a discussion group on a Universal Charter for a National City was launched in the summer of 2018 in collaboration with IUCN, World Urban Parks, Salzburg Global, Parks Canada, and international representatives.

The Foundation's objectives include conservation of London's culture, heritage and environment; protection of open space, wildlife and landscape; education; public health; good citizenship and community cohesion. The work involves links with the Mayor of London, City Hall, planners and policy makers; a forum with developers; discussions with health professionals; and much grassroots action with networking, campaigns, inspiration and good practice. It leads to the integration of social, cultural, economic and environmental concerns. Financial support from the Greener City Fund has supported a range of activities that have helped to mobilise volunteers and stimulate local action, thereby empowering and enabling people to change the spaces and streets around where they live. Overall there is recognition and respect for cultural diversity and the importance of both people: nature and people: environment relationships

In a lively discussion questions were raised about the catalytic things that inspire and motivate people; helping people to re-learn; and how to do more with less. JLW emphasised that the National Park City emphasized working with people to get things done. AM remarked that to create a resilient city involves protecting green spaces: caring for things we value the most. PF commented that people also need to accept that everything changes, but MC suggested that many landscape changes are for the worst. Change might have a negative connotation for many people. JB referred to the negative side of the World Heritage Lake District designation which is endeavouring to freeze the culture of the area in a time-warp to sustain an ecotourism image.

2. Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) (John Box)

Greenspace standards were one of the Urban Forum's greatest successes, having not only been adopted nationally, but being recognized internationally and incorporated in the World Health Organization's recommendation on urban green space and health. He had reviewed the adoption and practice of the local nature reserve (LNR) standard in several UK local authorities. In 1993 provision ranged from 1 ha LNR for 889 residents (Canterbury, small city with rural hinterland) to 1 ha for 170,500 (Camden, inner London). By 2006 it was from 1 ha LNR for 761 residents (Canterbury, small city with rural hinterland) to 1 ha for

107,038 (Camden, inner London). However in 2018, it had improved to 1 ha LNR for 363 residents in Canterbury, but worsened in Camden to 1 ha for 114,165. The broader data set of LNR data showed that adoption of the standard in the 1990s saw a considerable increase in the amount of LNR land, but there had been little change in the 2006-2018 period, which coincided with a great decline in local government finance and an expansion of population many cities.

In discussion PF explained that the Green Flag Awards were used instead of standards to encourage protection of urban nature. He emphasised the need to look at the impact of green space quality on people's health, pointing out the need for longitudinal studies. DH remarked on the paradox that Barrow in Furness was high in environmental quality, high in deprivation and high in large structures, but exercise was part of the local culture. AM emphasised the importance of distance and physical access to good quality green space, points others elaborated upon, with comments on effective consultation with people about their ideas for green space. Attention was given to how 24/7 access to green spaces led to different types of user throughout the day and how different parts of open space could provide for particular cultural and social needs. The success such events as the park run in London indicates how people can be brought into open spaces.

Discussion: Urban Ecology Manifesto/Charter/ Principles

DH led a wide ranging discussion on the varied statements and suggestions made by members about expressing the aims and future goals of the Forum. Debate over alternative names for the Forum showed that members that the Forum was a good expression of how a group of people with a passion for urban nature and human engagement sat round a table to work out ways of enhancing urban nature provision and use. However, there was a need to look ahead and think of the key things that ought to be done in the next five years. This ought to be a priority for the Forum

It was recognized that the link with UNHabitat was the most immediate need. Until this was finalized and a new logo was available, further discussion of awards should be postponed. Possibly the Forum could provide position statement or policy briefs on particular issues.

Treasurer's report

The treasurer's report was duly approved and noted.

The meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.

Date of next meeting

This was not discussed but subsequently the following dates have been suggested by the Chairman: mid December (10th/11th) or early January (8th-9th). Venue to be decided depending on availability of members for Manchester or London. Please inform Nigel Lawson (nigel.lawson@manchester.ac.uk) and Ian Douglas (ian.douglas@manchester.ac.uk) of your availability and locational preference.