

UK Urban Ecology Forum (UKUEF)
Minutes of the meeting held at The Linnean Society of London
Wednesday December 4th 2019

Present

Ian Douglas (ID)	University of Manchester
David Goode (DG)	University College London
David Haley (DH)	Artist and Educator
John Handley (JHan)	University of Manchester
Jane Houghton (JHou)	Natural England
Nigel Lawson (NL) (Hon. Sec.)	University of Manchester
Sarah Lindley (SL)	University of Manchester
Judy Ling Wong (JLW)	Black Environment Network
John Little (JW)	The Grass Roof Company
Alison Millward (AM)	Alison Millward Associates
Elizabeth Rollinson (ER)	Linnean Society
Richard Scott (RS) (Chair)	Eden Project
Victoria Sherwin (VS)	Myatt's Fields Park
Danielle Sinnett (DS)	University of the West of England
Niall Williams (NW)	Landscape artist and urban designer
Tim Webb (TW)	RSPB

Via telephone link

John Box (JB)	Unaffiliated
Pete Frost (PF)	Natural Resources Wales
Kerry Morrison (KM)	Artist and ecologist

Apologies

Dave Barlow, Ambra Burls, Blanche Cameron, Mark Champion, Paul Evans, Mathew Frith, Nick Grayson, Philip James, Paul Nolan, Julie Proctor, Joe Ravetz, Terry Robinson, Alan Scott, Joanne Tippett, Vincent Walsh, Phil Wheeler,

Minutes of meeting held September 11th 2019

The minutes were accepted

Chair's opening remarks

- RS welcomed new members John Little, Victoria Sherwin, Danielle Sinnett, Niall Williams and Tim Webb to the Forum
- RS outlined how re-establishing a link to the UN and a recent influx of new members is enabling the Forum to enter a new era
- RS thanked ER and the Linnean Society for hosting this meeting

Actions from the meeting held 11th September 2019

- NL reported that all members had submitted their short CVs and that they are now next to their names on the membership page of the Forum's web site.
- ID reported that he is hopeful of being able to obtain £500 from Routledge as a contribution to a member's attendance at WUF10.
- Other actions are either carried forward or are dealt with in agenda items below.

- **Relationship with UN Habitat and participation at WUF10**

JLW gave an in-depth presentation covering UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan, excerpts from the Global Stakeholders Forum Declaration including its' expectations and steps forward, guiding principles of the New Urban Agenda and how these developments are forging the UKUEF's new direction at the present time in fostering ecological and resilient cities and human settlements. JLW emphasised that the UKUEF would have to work through the UN Habitat Stakeholders Forum. There was already enthusiasm for such an approach from Nairobi. She also alleviated member's concerns on UKUEF's ability to move from one to the other of the domains in UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan and to provide critique and make recommendations. Her slides are attached as Appendix 1.

JLW spoke about the proposal that UKUEF establishes a methodology for the creation of Urban Ecology Forum's worldwide as well as city based Forums across the UK which has received a positive response from Natural England. DS and AM pointed out that local activists are likely to welcome some expertise on forming networks and that several groups such as for example urban tree forums could potentially embrace additional themes and become city wide urban ecology forums and VS suggested that we need to respond to people's needs. PF suggested that there was nothing to stop UKUEF from investigating a city-wide UEF in the UK which could be a good thing as well as elsewhere in the world and that we could try to find a potential pilot city. Further discussion focused on the suggestion that there are already many environmental and ecological organisations such as wildlife trusts and local nature partnerships operating locally in the UK and organisations such as the Landscape Institute are thinking along similar lines so there may not be a demand for additional city based urban ecology forums and that in practical terms, be beyond the present human resources and scope of UKUEF. JLW suggested that the UK city-wide urban forums might be a question of inspiring people to do more and so develop a bigger consortium to take things forward.

Nonetheless it was felt that the UKUEF is well-placed to fill a great need in providing guidance to UN-Habitat on establishing Urban Ecology Forums internationally and in particular in many developing countries (ID and DG). In conclusion to the wide-ranging debate there was a feeling that all members of the Forum need to work together and KM pointed out the need to consider our capacity, what we are doing and how we do it.

It was felt that UKUEF could make a valuable contribution to WUF10, not least via the Forum's philosophy of Urban Ecology and with case studies and ID pointed out that the second edition of the Handbook of Urban Ecology contains many case studies. A clear message needed to be prepared for WUF10 supported by succinct information on the Forum and its functions. It was thus agreed that UKUEF's participation at WUF 10 was important if it could be financed. ID had already said that he was

hopeful of obtaining £500 from Routledge for this purpose and JH confirmed that she has approached NE for finance to enable two members to attend.

Agreement: UKUEF to be represented at WUF 10 (subject to finance being raised)

Action: the development of a methodology for the formation of UK city wide and/or international country wide urban ecology forums for the UN to be considered at the next meeting in conjunction with the work programme.

- **UN-Habitat Assembly GSF launch event –preliminary discussion**

After discussion it was agreed to hold a launch event to celebrate the Forum having become a partner member in UN Habitat Assembly Global Stakeholder Forum (GFS) and it was agreed to accept ER's very kind confirmation that this event could be held in the main library of the Linnean Society on November 19th 2020 at 2.00pm. This is subject to a checking that the date does not clash with an event likely to attract similar representation. The comfortable maximum capacity of the library is 50 people. In discussion the need to attract prestigious people from the world of ecology (such as for example Tony Juniper the chair of NE who will be approached by JH) as well as potential funders, senior executives of such agencies as RSPB and RICS, senior local authority officers, local committee champions and the press was emphasized.

Peter Shirley had prior to the meeting suggested the formation of executive groups of members to take certain actions forward.

Agreed that RS, ER, JHou, PF and ID would form an initial Launch Event executive group.

Action: all members to provide names of appropriate invitees.

- **Urban Ecology Manifesto/Charter/Principles/Name**

DG has produced a "Philosophy and practice of Urban Ecology" which was distributed prior the meeting. He pointed out that this document should be regarded as work in progress and further references could be added. DH in conjunction with input from JLW, JB and RS has also been working on a Manifesto for the UK Urban Ecology Forum outlining we are, what we do, how we do it, why we do it, where we do it and what we want to achieve. In discussion it was pointed out that there is considerable overlap between the two documents. DH pointed out that the Forum needs to focus on who we are and what we do and NW raised concerns over fragmentation within the ecology sector and the need to clearly state the Forum's 'unique selling point'. In conclusion it was felt that all documents need to say the same thing and that whilst DG's Philosophy and practice of urban ecology is a stand-alone document and that a Manifesto is a living document; a statement merging the principal points and the essence of these documents (and including reference to the climate and the extinction crises) would act as the Forum's constitution in the event of a change of status to, for example, a charity.

Agreed that these documents be used to form a single statement covering the Forum's thinking and raison d'être and that DH, JB, JLW and ID form an executive group to take this forward.

Action: development of the Forum's constitution drawing on the manifesto, principles and philosophy documents outlined above.

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

JLW included in her presentation a proposal to transition from being an unincorporated association to small charity as well as an initial completion of the Small Charities Constitution Form which would form the basis of an application- see Appendix 2 attached. She felt that this would be a rapid and easily attained route for the Forum to be more attractive to potential funders and also outlined the responsibility of trustees, where up to six can be appointed. JLW, RS and NL had agreed to act as initial trustees and AM felt that this would be acceptable for a trial period of say one year. In further discussion KM queried the rationale for becoming a charity and proposed that consideration also be given to the Forum becoming a Community Interest Company (a CIC) and that this might be more with the Forum's longer term ambitions. After the meeting she outlined what is involved and this is attached as Appendix 3. It was also felt that any statement on our becoming a charity must be broad ID proposed that any application should include as an aim that the Forum seeks to "alleviate and cope with the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis". NL pointed out the importance of also be guided by which option might best be best for funding opportunities. JB suggested that a briefing note be circulated to all members outlining the rationale for becoming a small charity, alternative options, etc. and that this change in the status of the Forum be put to the vote of all members.

RS called for an indicative vote of how those present in the room would think at that moment about moving to charitable status. 11 members indicated that they would vote for it, three abstained. The three members participating on the telephone link did not have the opportunity to vote. It was clear that people understood that this was merely an expression of opinion and not a formal binding vote.

The clear process moving forward was for the Chairman (RS) to provide a briefing statement setting out the pros and cons of the small charity step and any possible alternatives. He would circulate it, along with JLW's proposal, for all members to consider, and eventually vote upon by a form of postal vote yet to be specified.

Action: RS undertook to draft a briefing note for members to vote on.

- **UKUEF committees and secretariat**

Peter Shirley's proposal on the formation of executive groups of members to take certain actions forward was accepted and acted on.

ID informed the meeting that NL had informed him, RS, and some other members of his advancing age and the commencement of both hearing and note taking difficulties and that the Forum should commence planning now for the continuation of the Secretariat into the future. NL thanked ID for raising this matter and informed the meeting that he is happy to continue to assist the Forum in whatever capacity this might be for as long as he is able.

- **Closure of the meeting**

Given that it was now 16.15 it was decided to defer discussion on the remainder of the agenda to an interim meeting to be held as soon as possible after the Christmas/New Year holidays.

Agreed that an interim meeting be held as a teleconference at 2.00pm on January 14th 2020

Action: JHou to explore and circulate the appropriate teleconferencing methodology in advance of January 14th 2020.

The following items form the draft agenda for the teleconference meeting on January 14th 2020 at 14.00

- Minutes of the meeting held 4th December 2019
- Actions from the meeting held 4th December 2020
- Apologies
- Work Programme
- Treasurer's report and financial planning
- Membership
- Draft proposal for balancing the membership of the forum
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Awards
- Web site
- Any other business
- Date of next meeting(s)

Appendix 1

Presentation by JLW on our link to UN-Habitat



Excerpt from Global Stakeholders Forum Declaration

Our Expectations

- We envision the realization of cities for all, referring to the equal use of cities and human settlements seeking to promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants of present and future generations without discrimination of any kind.
- We envisage cities that are habitable, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient cities and human settlements that foster prosperity and quality of life for all. We note the efforts of some national and local governments to enshrine this vision, referred to as “the right to the city” in their legislation, political declarations, and charters.
- We seek adequate support from Member States and other parties for meaningful stakeholder partnership within the UN Habitat governance and operational structures.

Our Steps Forward

- We are organizing to reformulate stakeholder roles and responsibilities underpinned by innovative approaches, inclusive practices and reciprocity among all parties to resolve critical urban and rural human settlement planning, development and governance challenges.
- **We will build on successful, inclusive and diverse platforms, networks and movements at global, regional, national, and especially at the local level.**
- We will engage effectively in the programs, policies and outcomes of the UN Habitat Assembly and its bodies aligned with the UN Habitat Strategic Plan 2020–2025.
- We welcome the new Stakeholder Advisory Group Enterprise (SAGE) to advise the UN Habitat Executive Director on strengthening partnerships for sustainable urban development.
- We will strengthen and further develop the Stakeholder Forum to implement the principles and commitments of this declaration leading up to WUF 2020.

Background to a new direction for UKUEF

Several developments are forging the UKUEF’s new direction at the present time:

- Our membership of the UN Habitat Global Stakeholders Forum, and therefore our alignment with the New Urban Agenda.
- A rapidly urbanising world.
- The recognition of the power of the concept of urban ecology to address SDGs through integrated nature-based solutions that result in social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes.
- The fact of climate emergency and the wildlife extinction crisis, and the challenge it poses re the setting of priorities on the themes of urban ecology.
- The ascendancy of equality and diversity issues in the public realm.
- The imminent publication and contribution of the revised version of the Routledge Urban Ecology Handbook.
- The UN Habitat Assembly is working towards innovation for better quality of life in cities and communities, with the sub-theme of the accelerated implementation of the New Urban Agenda towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The New Urban Agenda embodies three guiding principles:

Guiding Principles	Actions
Leave no one behind, ensure urban equity and eradicate poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing equitable access for all, to physical and social infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate housing and shelter at the center of the agenda - Public spaces as an enabler of socio-economic function of the city • Recognizing and leveraging culture, diversity and safety in cities • Enabling and strengthening participation and enhancing liveability and quality of life.
Achieve sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity and opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing agglomeration benefits of urbanization and avoiding land speculation, • Fair and equitable employment creation, productivity, competitiveness, diversification and • Innovation through a sustainable economic development
Foster ecological and resilient cities and human settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving sustainable patterns of consumption and production, • Protecting and valuing ecosystems and biodiversity, and • Adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change while increasing urban systems resilience to physical, economic, and social shocks and stresses

- UKUEF participated in the first session of the UN Habitat Assembly in Nairobi in May 2018, focusing on innovation for sustainable urbanization. In the context of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. The UN-Habitat Assembly was established by the United Nations General Assembly through a resolution endorsed on December 20 to help strengthen UN-Habitat's mandate.
- There were several special events around the plenary meeting of national governments, including a ministerial roundtable on mobilizing commitments for the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit 2019, a partnership and pledging conference in support of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda including a local and regional governments' forum.
- The assembly will meet every four years. It is the highest-level decision-making body focused on sustainable urbanization and human settlements. It has universal membership of all 193 United Nations member states.
- The present defined contribution around our membership of the Global Stakeholders Forum is the proposal to stimulate and support the formation of city-based urban ecology forums in the UK and abroad. Whether the UN will take up the proposal to work together or not, this is something that we can start within the UK. The cluster working idea around themes may develop into UK-wide groups, linking city-based forum members, or around city-based clusters that give a particular lead-theme to a city-based forum. Forums will grow organically, and do not necessarily take on all areas of work.

Appendix 2 Possible transfer from Unincorporated Organisation to charity

Proposal to transition from being an unincorporated association to small charity

- The Charities Commission has moved on and see all unincorporated associations that have charitable aims as charities.
- The proposal is to update ourselves and refresh the aims and objectives to align with CC through the use of its model small charity constitution.
- This allows us to get a HMRC charity number, which opens us to various funding schemes such as Give as We Live.
- This positions us to move to the next step as and when appropriate. If we go above £5000 we will then register with the charity commission and consider becoming incorporated - which will take us into being a CIC.

SMALL CHARITY CONSTITUTION

Suitable for small charities with an annual income under £5,000 that don't own a building or employ people and do not intend to register with the Charity Commission.

1 NAME

The charity's name is **UK Urban Ecology Forum**

2 THE PURPOSES OF THE CHARITY ARE:-

Overall Aim

UKUEF aims to promote the effective practice of urban ecology to benefit the health and well-being of the public, and the care and protection of nature in the UK and internationally.

Objectives

It will promote the benefits to the public and to nature through:

- Stimulating and supporting the formation of national and city-based urban ecology forums in partnership with others
- Establishing and maintaining knowledge sharing networks to support the effective practice of urban ecology
- Organising presentations and events that promote cross-sector and public understanding of the social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes of integrated nature-based solutions in the context of urban ecology
- Influencing policy and practice through the generation and promotion of guidance, discussion papers and publications on themes related to urban ecology
- Identifying and promoting good practice through a Bank of Good Ideas website
- Undertaking any other relevant actions relating to the overall aim

3 TRUSTEES

The charity shall be managed by a committee of trustees who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the charity.

4 CARRYING OUT THE PURPOSES

In order to carry out the charitable purposes, the trustees have the power to:

- (1) raise funds, receive grants and donations
- (2) apply funds to carry out the work of the charity
- (3) co-operate with and support other charities with similar purposes
- (4) do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve the purposes

5 MEMBERSHIP

The charity shall have a membership. People who support the work of the charity and are aged 18 or over, can apply to the trustees to become a member. Once accepted by the trustees, membership lasts for 3 years and may be renewed. The trustees will keep an up-to-date membership list.

The trustees may remove a person's membership if they believe it is in the best interests of the charity. The member has the right to be heard by the trustees before the decision is made and can be accompanied by a friend.

6 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGM

- (1) The AGM must be held every year, with 14 days notice given to all members telling them what is on the agenda. Minutes must be kept of the AGM.
- (2) There must be at least **8** members present at the AGM.
- (3) Every member has one vote.
- (4) The trustees shall present the annual report and accounts.
- (5) Any member may stand for election as a trustee.
- (6) Members shall elect between 3 and **6** trustees to serve for the next year. They will retire at the next AGM but may stand for re-election.

7 TRUSTEE MEETINGS

- (1) Trustees must hold at least 3 meetings each year. At their first meeting after the AGM they will elect a chair, treasurer and secretary. Trustees may act by majority decision.
- (2) At least 3 trustees must be present at the meeting to be able to take decisions. Minutes shall be kept for every meeting.
- (3) If trustees have a conflict of interest they must declare it and leave the meeting while this matter is being discussed or decided.
- (4) During the year, the trustees may appoint up to 2 additional trustees. They will stand down at the next AGM.
- (5) The trustees may make reasonable additional rules to help run the charity. These rules must not conflict with this constitution or the law.

8 MONEY AND PROPERTY

- (1) Money and property must only be used for the charity's purposes.
- (2) Trustees must keep accounts. The most recent annual accounts can be seen by anybody on request.
- (3) Trustees cannot receive any money or property from the charity, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.
- (4) Money must be held in the charity's bank account. All cheques must be signed by 2 trustees.

9 GENERAL MEETINGS

If the Trustees consider it is necessary to change the constitution, or wind up the charity, they must call a General Meeting so that the membership can make the decision. Trustees must also call a General Meeting if they receive a written request from the majority of members. All members must be given 14 days notice and told the reason for the meeting. All decisions require a two thirds majority. Minutes must be kept.

- (1) **Winding up** - any money or property remaining after payment of debts must be given to a charity with similar purposes to this one.
- (2) **Changes to the Constitution** - can be made at AGMs or General Meetings. No change can be made that would make the organisation no longer a charity.
- (3) **General Meeting** - called on written request from a majority of members.
- (4) Trustees may also call a General Meeting to consult the membership

10 **SETTING UP THE CHARITY**

This constitution was adopted on **4 December 2019** by the people whose signatures appear below. They are the first members of the charity and will be the trustees until the AGM, which must be held within one year of this date.

Note: The UK Urban Ecology Forum (formerly UK MAB Urban Forum) has been a charitable Unincorporated Association until this date, and has decided to adopt this small charity constitution from the Charities Commission. The existing officers of the former Unincorporated Association therefore will be the officers under this constitution.

Signed

Print name and address

Nominations

Appendix 3 Forming a Community Interest Company (a CIC)

It takes around 4 weeks to set up a CIC

And costs £27.00

And we would be eligible for funding from a variety of funders including The Esmee Fairburn Foundation

Community interest companies (CICs)

The following is from <https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise>

A CIC is a special type of limited company which exists to benefit the community rather than private shareholders.

To set up a CIC, you'll need:

- a 'community interest statement', explaining what your business plans to do
- an 'asset lock'- a legal promise stating that the company's assets will only be used for its social objectives, and setting limits to the money it can pay to shareholders
- a constitution - you can use [the CIC regulator's model constitutions](#)
- to get your company approved by the [community interest company regulator](#) - your application will automatically be sent to them

The CIC regulator has [guidance on setting up a CIC](#).

Set up a CIC online

[Register your CIC online](#) with Companies House.

It costs £27.

There is a much more info about CIC's here https://www.start.biz/nationwide/cic_inf including: **In a Charity...** Trustees may not take a salary for being Trustees. The Charity may not "permanently trade", which means it is not suitable for selling goods or services. Certain tax concessions

are allowed. All charities must have their Accounts audited. **in a CIC...**Directors can take a salary. The company can trade much like a normal business. There are no Tax concessions for CICs. Accounts do not have to be audited unless the company's annual turnover exceeds £5.6 million.