



The UK Man and the Biosphere Committee Urban Forum

Minutes of the UK MAB Urban Forum meeting held 25th February 2009 at University of Manchester

1. Present

Gerald Dawe	(GD)	Independent consultant (Chair)
Ian Angus	(IA)	Scottish National Heritage
Helen Barber	(HB)	Aston University (by invitation)
Ambra Burls	(AB)	Anglia Ruskin University (Deputy Chair)
Peter Cush	(PC)	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Ian Douglas	(ID)	University of Manchester
Peter Frost	(PF)	Countryside Council for Wales
John Handley	(JH)	University of Manchester
Philip James	(PJ)	University of Salford
Nigel Lawson	(NL)	University of Manchester (Secretary)
Peter Massini	(PM)	Natural England
Grant Luscombe	(GL)	Landlife, National Wildflower Centre
Joe Ravetz	(JR)	University of Manchester

2. Apologies

John Box, Eilidh Johnston, Alison Millward, Julie Proctor.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were approved.

4 Matters arising

Outstanding actions from the last meeting were reviewed:

- A1 Request for publications for the Forum web site: NL to write to members who have not yet responded. **A1**
- A2 Logging system: To be discussed at the next meeting. GD will attend to this and see what has been done over the last few years. **A2**
- A3 Inter-agency bid to SNH, CCW and NIEA for funding for the Forum has been accepted in principle and cash has also been allocated by Natural England. The hope is get an understanding by all four agencies to allocate funding for the Forum for a three year period. GD thanked the Inter-Agency Group for their support.
- A4 being attended to under AOB
- A5 Circulation of Statins and Greenspaces: NL reported that he is still holding about 400 copies. GD and NL to undertake additional distribution. **A3**

- A6 UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence to *Meanwhile Wildlife Gardens*. GD and AB to attend to and to send them the award citation as soon as possible **A4**
- A7 Nomination of *Roots and Shoots* for the UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence. Roots and Shoots provides vocational training for young people from the inner city, mainly from the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. AS and MF undertook to visit and to report. PF to provide NL with a pro-forma covering requirements for receipt of the Award for Excellence for posting on the Forum's web site. **A5**
- A8 Done. Buglife's presentation is on the Forum's web site.
- A9 being attended to under Any Other Business
- A 10 nomination of Buglife's legal process for UK MAB Urban Forum Award for Excellence to be assessed by IA: GD to supply IA with Phil Michaels contact details. NL reported that Buglife had enquired about progress and it was agreed to consider this nomination at the next meeting. **A6**
- IA highlighted the need for better guidance covering the Award process and that it should be on the Forum's web site. GD and NL to review the guidance procedure. **A7**
- A11 to A17 are attended to below under Conferences.
- A18 The work programme has been updated. GD, AB and NL who undertook to meet in Manchester on March 24th to give detailed consideration to some of the older items on the programme. **A8**
- A19 GD formally welcomed Philip James to the Forum.
- A20 Invitation to a consultant a Mosaic Habitat Working Group to address the Forum: PF felt that this is premature until such time as surveys had been undertaken. PF will keep the Forum informed. **A9**
NB the Forum's participation in the Mosaic Habitat Project under AOB below.

5. Presentation by Helen Barber Aston University “Integrating biodiversity throughout the lifecycle of a major urban development project”.

Helen Barber presented an overview of her PhD research project, which is being funded by Middlemarch Environmental Consultants. Her research focuses on the obstacles to maximising biodiversity in large urban projects. It highlights the need for consultation and collaboration between many different agencies and that enforcement is not effective.

6. Conferences:

a. Street Trees and Sustainability

The concern is trees in the urban environment and the purpose of the conference is to change how urban trees are managed. The conference should be controversial and should reflect passion rather than just academic debate. It should have a catchy title such as “Conkers or Cancer”. The conference should consider the case for and against street trees and should address issues such as health and well-being, economics, aesthetics, wind throw effects on trees, and insurance. Some recent historic matters (1980s)? such as street tree trenching might also prove relevant. The aim should be to change policy and practice. Participation by a celebrity and/or adaptation by a programme such as the BBC's Spring Watch or the One Show would

provide exposure and this might be arranged through DNL's media connections. Speakers proposed/organisation to be contacted included Ted Green (Ancient Tree Forum), James Ogilvie Social Policy Advisor Forest Commission Scotland, the insurance industry, urban planners, Manchester CC Green Team, Red Rose Forest, Mersey Forest Forum members are requested to suggest speakers.

NL reported that UCL are unable to confirm room bookings prior to end May. It was thus decided to hold the conference late October or November 2009.

NL to try to obtain confirmation of room booking at UCL as soon as possible **A10** PM to invite Jim Smith (Forestry Commission) to address the conference and to investigate the GLA as an alternative venue **A11**.

GD to contact the International Society for Arboreal Cultures and the London Tree Officer's Association regarding their participation and to submit a renewed plan to CCW and to approach the International Journal of Urban Forestry regarding publication of the proceedings **A12**

NL to liaise with GD and all Forum members and to coordinate responses **A13**

b) Post-URGENT meeting:

GLE has material on ecological findings from the URGENT programme that there is synergy with UNESCO's Biosphere Research programme.

It was felt that an event would be useful and PF undertook to contact GLE and to report progress at the next meeting **A14**

c) Greenspace Toolbox.:

Requires a workshop. Issues: Whilst many toolkits cover issues such as greenspace for health and wellbeing, playing fields and adaptation to climate change there is nothing on pollution control and there is a need to assess all types of green spaces and to provide a comprehensive guide which will reach all stakeholders including the private sector and be in accessible language for community groups.

CCW could build up a toolbox and possibly involve the Forum.

A sub group of the Forum comprising PF, AB, GLE and GD with NL in attendance agreed to meet on the day prior or after the May 27th meeting of the Forum to take this forward. NL to arrange accordingly **A15**

d) International Conference on Human Ecology at University of Manchester June 29th to July 3rd 2009:

The Forum will be organising a workshop on Thursday July 2nd 10.00 to 16.00 which will be facilitated by PF. GD has identified speakers and will submit a synopsis. **A16**

GD will also deliver a keynote speech.

e) Green Infrastructure Conference. PM drew member's attention to ParkCity, a two-day conference sponsored by CABE and Natural England. Details are available at:

<http://livegroup.co.uk/parkcity/index.php?view=introduction>

f) Shanghai Expo: Following the 3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Madrid, 2008, the UK agreed to help MAB drive forward the 'urban' issues arising from the Madrid Action Plan. In connection with this the MAB Secretariat have contacted the UK MAB Committee and said: "we can try to get 1/2 experts from UK for a meeting in the Shanghai Expo as part of a larger UNESCO-China Forum on "Cultural Heritage and Urban Regeneration". PF undertook to contact the MAB Secretariat to find out what they had in mind for the UK 'experts' to do,

and what outcomes they were seeking from the meeting. **A16**.
Details of the Shanghai Expo are at
<http://en.expo2010china.com/index.htm>

7. A Handbook of Urban Ecology

ID reported that the due date for receipt of contributions was February 28th 2009. Unfortunately some potential contributors had dropped out and that some help from Forum members might still be required.

8. Development of a system to log progress of the Forum.

This item is still pending and will be considered when the work programme is reviewed- see below.

9 Work programme

GD, AB and NL who undertook to meet in Manchester on March 24th to give detailed consideration to the work programme, including some of the older items still on the programme **A17**.

10. Financial report

NL reported that the balance at 31st December 2008 stood at £5,384.25.00 of which £4,000.00 is in a deposit account. It was agreed that the Forum should seek to maintain a reserve equivalent to 2 years turnover.

10. Any other business

- PF reported that the UK MAB Parent Committee is still seeking to enhance its links with the Urban Forum and that Andy Bell should be invited to address the next meeting of UK MAB Urban Forum. **A18**
GD undertook to attend the next UK MAB Committee meeting **A19**
- GL reported that as part of the Liverpool Year of the Environment, Tim Smit (Eden Project) will deliver the inaugural Tony Bradshaw Memorial Lecture on Tuesday 22nd September 2009. Further details will be distributed to members as and when they are available.
- Social Trends: It was agreed that a sub group of the Forum comprising GD, AB, PF and AM would meet to discuss this issue on the day prior or the day after the May 27th meeting. **A20**
- Mapping of open mosaic habitats on previously developed land: Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land (Brownfield sites) has been included in the new list of UKBAP Priority Habitats and species. ADAS Ltd has been appointed by Defra to deliver the first phase of this work, which will conclude in summer 2009. The Urban Forum has agreed to participate in the consultation process and to assist by providing ADAS with details any ecological surveys on previously developed land of which they are aware. NL undertook to collate the Forum's response and to feed it to ADAS. **A21**

11. Dates of future meetings

- Wednesday 27th May 2009 London, UCL.
- Wednesday 23rd September 2009 Belfast (to be confirmed)
- Wednesday 9th December 2009 Location to be confirmed