

The UK-MAB Urban Forum

www.ukmaburbanforum.co.uk

Annual Report 2012/13 and Approved Work Programme 2013/14



THE UK-MAB URBAN FORUM

The Urban Forum of the UK Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee is a network of specialists, practitioners and thinkers involved with nature conservation in urban areas. Its mission is to raise awareness, stimulate research, influence policy, improve the design and management of urban systems, and push urban biodiversity and nature conservation up the social and political agenda. Its distinctive contribution to this goal is integrated thinking. The Urban Forum tries to reflect and express these specialisms and the many complex realities they represent. In the breadth of its agenda and the range of its membership, it is unique within the UK.

Members of the Urban Forum come from a wide variety of backgrounds from voluntary organisations to local authorities, government agencies and the private sector: from those primarily concerned with conserving “nature” – plants, wildlife, biodiversity – to those, researchers and practitioners, who work with people and deal with the human use of green space. Currently there are some 27 members who collectively contribute to the continuing reputation of the UK as a centre of excellence in this field. The networking and multi-disciplinary approach which is the hallmark of the Urban Forum is a source of new insights whose promulgation to a wider audience is seen as one of the Forum’s key roles.

The Urban Forum meets four times a year, but much of its work is done through networking and informal task and finish groups. In order to maximise the contribution and commitment of its members, all of whom work in a voluntary capacity and have heavy professional workloads of their own, it sets annual work programmes with a strategic framework and realistic targets for delivery.

The Urban Forum was established as a working group in 1988. Its main work has been in publishing papers, preparing comments on national issues and policies, generating new concepts, guidelines and research, organising conferences and workshops, and networking with other expert groups. Some of its work is done in collaboration with other organisations. It also awards the UK-MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence (which includes the MAB logo) to key demonstration projects – a process that involves site visits and appraisals.

ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013

Activities

- The Handbook of Urban Ecology, edited by Ian Douglas and David Goode, was published by Routledge in 2012
- Ian Douglas contributed to the Green Infrastructure Partnership, SCOPE Urban Futures in Shanghai and the Ecosystems Knowledge Network
- Alison Millward contributed to Defra's People Engagement Group (National Biodiversity Strategy 2020)
- A register of members' expertise and interests was created to facilitate networking with other organisations
- Strategy review and six work programme planning workshops

Awards

- Black Environment Network, 2012
- Birmingham and Black Country Living Landscape, Community Involvement Programme, 2012
- Bankside Open Spaces Trust, for community and volunteer involvement 2012
- Buglife for brownfield restoration, 2012

Meetings

- Regular quarterly meetings of the Forum (January, June and October 2012 and February 2013)
- Ambra Burls and Alison Millward to meetings of the UK MAB Parent Committee
- Ian Douglas and Nigel Lawson met with Defra's Greenspace North West, 2012
- Nigel Lawson and Alison Millward met with the Prince's Foundation, 2012

Site visits

- Forum members attending the meeting of the Forum on 27 June 2012 visited Bilston Art Gallery and Coppice Wood, Wolverhampton - two of the Black Country Living Landscape community involvement programme sites
- Forum members attending the February 2013 meeting visited Windrush Drive (a Western Harbour coastal regeneration site) and Graigmillar (a housing regeneration site) both in Edinburgh. The visits were led by Charlie Cumming of the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust

Guest presentations to meetings

- David Haley, Manchester Metropolitan University (January 2012) - how the arts can contribute to raising awareness of undeveloped urban greenspace, housing design and rising sea levels
- Kerry Morrison, Salford University (January 2012) - participatory arts events to raise awareness about urban greenspace issues
- Celia Spouncer Independent, and University of Ulster (January 2012) - public art installations on urban greening issues in Northern Ireland

Membership

New Members

The Forum is delighted to welcome the following new members:

- David Haley, Manchester University
- Kerry Morrison, Salford University
- Celia Spouncer, Independent, Northern Ireland

Resignations

None during 2012/13.

Offices

Alison Millward was elected as the new chair and coordinator (from October 2012 to September 2015)
Judy Ling Wong and Ambra Burls were appointed by the Forum as Vice Chairs.

Financial Statement

The Forum acknowledges grateful receipt of £4583.64 that was transferred to it following the winding up of the Urban Wildlife Network in 2011/12.

The general expenditure of the Forum to year ending 5th April 2013 to cover the cost of meetings of the Forum, members and invited speaker's travel expenses in attending meetings of the Forum which could not be recovered elsewhere, production of award plaques, maintaining the secretariat and maintaining the web site: £3019.19

Bank balance (net) at 5 th April 2013:	£5742.66
Income to year ending 5 th April 2013 (all but £0.91 from statutory agencies):	£2550.91
Outstanding liability occurred during year ending 5 th April 2013: for expenses	£ 384.02
Projected income from the Forum's funders to year ending 5 th April 2014: (Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage and Dept Envt Northern Ireland)	£2000.00

The Forum acknowledges the considerable contribution in unpaid time constantly provided by many members of the Forum.

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME REPORT 2012/2013

Core Work

Topic	Project	Targets
Scientific	Science related work and outputs	Guidance documents; publications; organising conferences/seminars; attending conferences; participation in consultation processes; etcetera.
MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	Developing the Award	Awards to appropriate urban nature reserves and individuals. Reviewing existing awarded sites.
Contributing to MAB	UK MAB Committee	Ensure Forum liaises effectively with parent committee.
Urban Biosphere	Applying the Biosphere Reserve concept to urban areas	To report progress from the UK on the application of the Biosphere Reserve concept to human settlements and to collaborate internationally on the achievement of Target 23.1 from the UNESCO MAB Madrid Action Plan: To facilitate the integration of urban areas into Biosphere Reserves.
The Urban Forum website	Development and maintenance	To ensure the website acts as an effective means to communicate the Forum's work to interested parties
Maintaining the Urban Forum's financial security	Fund raising	To secure sufficient funds for the Forum's core costs and ensure funds are secured to implement work programme projects.
Membership of the Urban Forum	Attracting appropriate nominees to the Forum	To ensure that the Forum membership continues to be represented by top specialists and continues to reflect and express current thinking and the state of the art in nature conservation in urban areas. Annual review of the membership structure by the membership committee.

Project Work (2012/2013)

Topic	Project	Principal participants	Targets	Progress as at 8th February 2013
Greenspace Toolbox	To undertake an overview and assessment of existing greenspace toolkits and other methods of evaluating and valuing ecosystem services.	Ian Douglas, Pete Frost, John Handley and Philip James	To hold a conference in 2012 or 2013 for professionals on toolkit compilation and assessment.	<p><i>Toolkits workshop held at University of Salford 15/11/2011. Two working parties established, one to examine socio-cultural evaluations, the other to examine economic/ecological evaluations.</i></p> <p><i>ID and NL organising a further workshop with Kirsty Rhind of Greenspace North West for 2013.</i></p> <p><i>ID to report.</i></p>
Passing Through: Urban Greening and Future Water for Town and Cities	Objective is to hold a conference and workshop on this topic under the UNESCO label in 2012/13 and to produce a unique paper/guidance document.	Ian Douglas, Jane Houghton, John Handley, Nigel Lawson and Peter Shirley		<p><i>Initial discussion document prepared and circulated to members.</i></p> <p><i>Sub-committee held a meeting on 18th January 2012. Members to hold a series of discussions with organisations such as CIRIA, UU, Defra/EA, Water UK, Waterwise, the RHS and others.</i></p>
Textbook on Urban Ecology	Following publication of the Handbook on Urban Ecology, Taylor and Francis have asked ID about a Textbook on Urban	Ian Douglas and Philip James	To edit a textbook on urban ecology	<i>Contract with Routledge signed in December 2011 with final manuscript to be submitted by April 2013.</i>

	Ecology			
City People and the Nation's Forests	Forum briefing paper emphasising that woodland places like Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, the Weald of Kent, Red Rose Forest, Delamere Forest and those of the Peak District and Lake District are of as much importance to the people of the urban conurbations such as London and Manchester as they are to the people living in their immediate proximity.	Ian Douglas, David Goode, Philip James, and John Handley.	To prepare and distribute a guidance document.	<p><i>DG has established that Ted Trzyna would be interested in such a review.</i></p> <p><i>A response to the Independent Panel on Forestry in England was submitted at the end of July 2012.</i></p>
Training Sessions for RTPI	To undertake a training session for RTPI to raise awareness of green infrastructure in respect of adaptation strategies to climate change.	Samantha Davenport, Peter Cush, Alison Millward and Ambra Burls	For RTPI to raise awareness of green infrastructure in respect of adaptation strategies to climate change	<p><i>Proposal developed at 8th Feb 2013 Forum, for a participative workshop style CPD event to offer planners in all regions the opportunity to masterplan green and blue infrastructure on base maps for their areas. SD to progress.</i></p>
MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	Awarding suitable sites/projects. JLW has agreed to promote the Award, to undertake a review of the award criteria, and to investigate how the Forum can offer ongoing support to Award winners.	Judy Ling Wong with Alan Scott, Mathew Frith and Alison Millward	To complete the assessments of nominated sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Black Country Living Landscapes: assessed and approved by John Box, 2012</i> <i>Wigan Greenheart being assessed by JFH and NL who will report to next meeting</i> <i>Leicester's Eco-House being assessed by PS</i> <i>Black Environment Network assessed by JB and awarded June 2012</i> <i>Buglife's application is under</i>

				<p><i>consideration by ID</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>News from MF awaited re potential of Clapton Park, London Rivers Action Plan and Brighton White Walks</i> • <i>Gordon Square, London assessed by AS Oct 2012; further discussion required within Forum about recommendation</i> • <i>Bankside Open Spaces Trust, London assessed by SD, JH & AM. Award approved by Forum Feb 2013</i> • <i>Olympic Park. Oct 2012 Forum felt it was too early to assess the sustainability of the innovative work. AS and MF to monitor progress. AB to contact Nigel Dunnett for an update.</i> <p><i>Paper reviewing criteria taken at Feb 2013 Forum. Further work to be done to complete review.</i></p>
Sharing good practice	To share good practice on the design, management and engagement of the community in urban green spaces through site visits.	All	<p>Two site visits per year.</p> <p>Paper.</p>	<p><i>Members visited Coppice Wood and Bilston Art Gallery in the Black Country, June 2012.</i></p> <p><i>Summary of community engagement</i></p>

				<i>in country agencies published in February 2013.</i>
Scientific	Organisation of and contributions for conferences, seminars and workshops.	Philip James, Alison Millward and Kerry Morrison	9-12 Sept 2013	<i>Initial work completed on co-hosting a symposium on changing urban areas through landscape scale ecological processes. 20 papers were put forward including four from Urban Forum members and have been reviewed and sifted by the group.</i>

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014

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Project Work Programme (2013/2014)

Topic	Project	Principal participants (leads in bold)	Targets	Progress
MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	To complete assessments of projects in pipeline under current criteria.	(See target column)	Complete assessments of Wigan Greenheart (JFH, NL), Buglife (ID) and Leicester Eco-house (PS).	<i>Draft proposals discussed at February and June 2013 meetings. AS and MF to confirm new guidance by December 2013.</i>
	To review and publish revised criteria for the Award.	Judy Ling Wong, Alan Scott and Mathew Frith	Publish revised criteria in September 2013.	
Greenspace Toolbox	To undertake an overview and assessment of existing greenspace toolkits and other methods of evaluating and valuing ecosystem services.	Ian Douglas, Pete Frost, John Handley and Philip James	To hold a conference in 2012 or 2013 for professionals on toolkit compilation and assessment.	<i>Toolkits workshop held at University of Salford 15/1/2011. Two working parties established: one to examine socio-cultural evaluations, the other to examine economic/ecological evaluations.</i> <i>Narrative to be added to list document and uploaded to web site to signpost enquirers to relevant toolkits.</i> <i>Document to be further expanded to include an assessment against</i>

				<i>criteria to be defined by PF.</i> <i>Conference still to be arranged but delayed due to withdrawal of original co-hosting organisation.</i>
Textbook on Urban Ecology	Following publication of the Handbook on Urban Ecology, Taylor and Francis have asked ID about a Textbook on Urban Ecology.	Ian Douglas and Philip James	To edit a textbook on urban ecology	<i>Contract with Routledge signed in December 2011 with final manuscript to be submitted by April 2013.</i>
Arts and Nature Road show	To plan and deliver a programme of 12 events as part of a road show, at locations around the UK. To raise external funding to deliver programme.	Judy Ling Wong , David Haley, Kerry Morrison, Celia Spouncer, Ambra Burls, Richard Scott	12 events between 2014 and 16.	<i>Project plan and budget prepared in March 2013.</i> <i>Pump priming funding received from BEN.</i> <i>2014 venues confirmed in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Tipton and London.</i>
Community Engagement	To stimulate greater community engagement in urban green space projects.	Chris Nevin and Julie Procter , Jane Houghton, Pete Frost, Peter Shirley, Terry Robinson	List and promote best practice in UK and beyond to a target audience. Organise a conference and publish proceedings.	<i>Summary of community engagement in country agencies published in February 2013.</i> <i>Work plan for promotional work to be approved in September 2013.</i>

			Maintain overview of research findings.	
Training Sessions for RTPI	Design and deliver a participative workshop style CPD event to offer planners in all regions the opportunity to master plan green and blue infrastructure on base maps for their areas.	Samantha Davenport, Peter Cush, Alison Millward, Ambra Burls	One workshop in each RTPI region between 2013 and 2014	<i>Event format to be agreed in September 2013.</i>
Landscape scale change	To co-host and contribute to a symposium at the Intl Assoc Landscape Ecology European Congress, September 2013.	Philip James and Alison Millward, Kerry Morrison, Sam Davenport, Peter Cush	Co-host a symposium and publish papers on Urban Forum web site. Put forward papers from Urban Forum members.	<i>Four papers submitted by Urban Forum members plus 20 others for an agreed symposium on changing urban areas through landscape scale ecological processes.</i>
Pro-environmental behaviour & green health literacy	To develop the Forum's thinking and position on these topics and identify options for promoting pro-environmental behaviours and green health literacy.	Ambra Burls, Kerry Morrison, Peter Cush, Julie Procter	Recruit additional members to the group. Publish a position paper and hold a one day event on the topic.	
Strengthening links with UK Biospheres	To introduce Urban Forum members to the lead individuals in the UK Biosphere reserves that have urban areas, to share information and understanding on planning	Jane Houghton, Peter Frost, Peter Shirley	Workshop with site visit in Aberystwyth or Brighton summer/autumn	<i>Workshop with Brighton and Hove planned for November 2013.</i>

	<p>and management of urban areas.</p> <p>To identify benefits of urban areas to help promote the designation of new Biosphere reserves.</p>		<p>2013.</p> <p>Paper to summarise presentations and discussions.</p>	