

BIOSPHERE RESERVE PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday 23th September 2011
Amory Centre, South Molton

Present: Mike Moser (Chairman), Richard Butler (Vice Chairman), Jan Kennedy (North Devon Council), Brian Frazer-Smith (Devon Association of Parish Councils), Alex Stevens (National Farmers Union), Rose Day (AONB Partnership Chairman Cllr. Gaye Tabor (Torrige District Council), Barb Francis (Torrige District Council), Rob Fish (University of Exeter), Derrick Spear (North Devon Plus, Tarka Country Trust), Juliet Bidgood (NEAT Design), Mark Wallace (Beaford Arts), Jay Rowntree (Environment Agency), Lesley Garlick (Devon County Council), Peter Howard (Landscape Research Group, Bournemouth University,), Robert Down (Coastwise and North Devon Biosphere Foundation (NDBF)), Eirene Williams (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group(FWAG)), Pete Burgess (Devon Wildlife Trust), David Appleton (Natural England), Cllr. Rodney Cann (North Devon Council).

Observers; Tim Wall (Mole Valley Farmers), Sue Neary (University of the 3rd Age (U3A)), Cllr Yablsey Devon County Council (opening only),
NDABS In attendance: Matt Edworthy, Linda Blanchard, Andy Bell, Gigha Klinkenborg

Apologies: Cllr Caroline Chugg, Steve Mullberry, Tim Robbins, Tony Pratt, Peter Jollands, Cllr Brian Redwood, Cllr David Lausen, Martin Wickham.

Item	Issues	Action agreed
1. Chairman's Introduction	The Chairman welcomed members, invitees and staff to the Biosphere Partnership meeting and thanked all for attending. The chairman reviewed the various activities since the last meeting such as: the partnership developing around the policies set in the Natural Environment White Paper, the series of Biosphere BAP articles in the North Devon Journal along with other positive media coverage, positive news about funding for Life's Journey, the start of the Confluence Project, the Biosphere Sustainable Farming award.	
2. Minutes	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.	AB check refreshed Action plan is on BR website

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<p>3. Matters Arising</p>	<p>New Members MVF cooperation with the Biosphere Reserve is evolving; Tim Wall attends today as an observer and hopes to join in February as a full member.</p> <p>U3A – Sue Neary explained the work of U3A as being predominantly for people over 55 years of age, there were monthly meetings of the 8 local groups in North Devon with thematic groups operating over the whole area. U3As are self-help, self-managed lifelong learning co-operatives for older people no longer in full time work, providing opportunities for their members to share learning experiences in a wide range of interest groups and to pursue learning not for qualifications, but for fun. Sue represents the U3A as a Regional Trustee. Their interest in the Biosphere Reserve was stimulated after a talk by Tom Hynes. Members are voluntary, of various physical abilities, and could be involved in the Biosphere Reserve work in a number of areas.</p> <p>Local Authority engagement & North Devon AONB and Biosphere Service Cllr Yabsley (Chairman of DCC and Councillor for South Molton Rural) welcomed the meeting and appreciated the inputs of all the partners to the work of the Biosphere Reserve. He noted the challenging financial climate and asked what measures were being taken in that regard.</p> <p>MM described the positive discussions that he and the vice chairman had had with the District councils individually and at a joint meeting of Devon County Council, Torridge District Council and North Devon Council, lead members. The meetings had been positive and constructive, and the value and potential of the Biosphere Reserve was beginning to be clear to funding bodies. He noted that the BR team of NDABS played both a vital function in co-ordination as well as delivery, helping to secure the added-values of the whole BR Partnership for north Devon. The main conclusions of the meeting with the councils had been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is a valuable designation for the area • The BR must continue to have a coordinating team, to draw-in the added values of the Partnership • Efforts should be made to secure a 3 year agreement for the Biosphere Reserve team • Members would value similar strategic meetings at regular intervals. <p>Cllr Cann & Cllr Yabsley suggested DCC members' funds for the next financial year may be a</p>	<p>Core funding group to develop the 3 year agreement.</p>

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	<p>source for gap funding if there are any cuts made in the regular budget and hoped that the district authorities might maintain the same level of funding. In response both district members agreed to try.</p> <p>Cllr Tabor (TDC) confirmed Barry Parsons; the new leader of TDC is very supportive. She will ensure positive support and advised that the discussions start very soon on establishing the 3 year agreement for the Biosphere Reserve.</p> <p>Cllr Cann (NDC) emphasised the support of NDC and that we should stay positive, both District Members and Cllr Cann agreed to try to sustain the budget for the Biosphere Reserve.</p> <p>Biodiversity offsets. AB will cover this in the main agenda</p> <p>Review terms of reference for the Marine Working Group</p> <p>Robert Down reported on the MWR The final proposals for MCZs had been recently published. The MWGs proposals had been largely adopted with the variance in the size of the estuary MCZ and the early inclusion of the proposed Atlantic Array area. The work of the BR Marine Working Group had been complimented and welcomed by Finding Sanctuary.</p> <p>AB and Robert Down presented the proposed new terms of reference. They included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide the Biosphere Reserve technical input into the North Devon Fisheries LAG EU cash for projects and development related to fishing. ◆ Technical oversight for the response to the Atlantic Array and technical economic and environmental information on the BRs aims and interests bearing in mind need to be wary of large negative impact versus little benefit. ◆ MCZ – development of governance structures and baseline data for the MCZs in the Biosphere Reserve. <p>The above were designed to be discrete tasks and to avoid mission creep for the working group.</p>	<p>The partnership agreed the new ToR for the group.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>UK MAB Committee</p> <p>Richard Butler reported on UK MAB. He described the MAB programme as an intergovernmental science programme and of the similar programmes covering earth sciences, hydrology, oceans,</p>	

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	<p>and social transformations, and of the collaboration between these sectors. Established in 1971, it proposes an interdisciplinary research agenda and capacity building that targets the ecological, social and economic dimensions of biodiversity loss and the reduction of this loss. The programme aims to set a scientific basis for the improvement of the relationships between people and their environment globally. The agenda of the MAB Programme is defined by its main governing body, the International Co-ordinating Council in conjunction with the broader MAB Community represented through regional networks. There are now over 550 Biosphere Reserves throughout the world. The current global strategy for the MAB programme is defined in the Madrid Action Plan which runs from 2008 to 2013. EuroMAB is the regional body that the UK participates in; and it facilitates the collaboration between member states from western Canada to the Ural Mountains and south to the Mediterranean.</p> <p>There are 7 BRs in the UK, one in Wales, 3 in England and 3 in Scotland. Five have been withdrawn, one example being St Kilda, where there is simply not the local communities to participate in a BR. It does however, remain a World Heritage Site. North Devon is leading the UK as fully operational, with Dyfi in Wales, and expected soon is Galloway and Southern Ayrshire. The reserves yet to become functional are Moor House-Upper Teesdale, North Norfolk Coast, Beinn Eighe and Loch Druidibeg in Scotland. Brighton and Hove and its environs are keen on becoming a Biosphere Reserve and they are being supported by the UK committee.</p> <p>UKMaB has a new Chairman who was also a UNESCO Chair in sustainable development in mountain areas. UNESCO has a regional structure as well as the global network. The work programme of UKMaB has a work programme that has 2 principal strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the domestic development of BRs with individual members supporting latent and nascent Biosphere Reserves to become fully operational, ◆ the international programmes and collaboration being led by Andy Bell. <p>Andy Bell reported that UK MAB had consistent ministerial support for the MAB programme and the committee was getting the message across.</p>	
5.	<p>Natural Environment White Paper</p> <p>David Appleton (NE) introduced the Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP), indicating the key</p>	

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	<p>policy areas (Protecting and improving the natural environment, Growing a green economy, Reconnecting people and nature, International and EU leadership, Monitoring and reporting. The presentation covered the background documents such as the National Ecosystem Assessment and the Lawton Report which put a focus on systems rather than species and discrete habitats. He identified that the Biosphere Reserve was already well suited to test the policies of the NEWP. In particular the Biosphere Reserve Partnership was applying for a Nature Improvement Area, a Biodiversity Offset Pilot status and part of the Devon-wide bid for a Local Nature Partnership.</p> <p>Peter Burgess(DWT) gave a presentation on the proposed North Devon Nature Improvement Area.</p> <p>This area would be based largely on the Torridge catchment but reduced to meet or attempt to meet the recommended area size of 50000 Ha. The Torridge was chosen because the river valleys/catchments have more public identity than the culm grasslands per se; the Torridge also has challenges in meeting Water Framework Directive targets and has a good biodiversity profile. The Biosphere Reserve has the advantage of bringing a strong coherent partnership with proven ability to deliver the programme. The proposed programme focussed on extending the principles of the Working Wetlands project and also taking into account the need for increased woodland cover and better woodland management for a more robust and resilient ecosystem.</p> <p>The key objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a more robust and coherent Torridge ecosystem 2. Enable the Torridge to realise its full potential to deliver high quality ecosystem services 3. Enable communities to understand the value and role of nature in delivering a range of ecosystem services through active participation and engagement 4. Integration across a wide range of partners and stakeholders delivering conservation and land management benefits in the Torridge 5. Seek to internalise the benefits of good ecosystem services into the local economy through supporting local markets for goods and ecosystem services <p>Submission of the bid (first round) is 30th September. If successful the bid will go to round 2 and develop a full business plan. There is a steering group pulling the bid together that includes MVF, Biosphere Reserve, Natural England, Environment Agency, Devon County Council, Forestry Commission. Partners were asked to send letters of support. Rose Day offered a letter of support on behalf of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Eirene Williams emphasised it was</p>	<p>Members to send in letters of support by 30th September</p> <p>AB to circulate the</p>

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	<p>important to have partners who understood the needs of farmers. Peter Brugess re-emphasised the partnership and multi-discipline nature of the programme. Alex Stevens: stressed that we need to ensure that farmers/landowners are not polarised in running the programme. The final copy of the bid will be circulated to partners. The NFU support the idea in principle, as did the DAPC.</p> <p>It was agreed the Pearl Rivers area (Mole and Bray) will be an associated project for species recovery of the freshwater pearl mussels that have not bred in 50 years in the Torridge.</p> <p>Biodiversity Offsets AB reviewed progress with the Biodiversity offset programme and how it had evolved taking into account details of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy. The Biosphere Reserve team is now leading a bid on behalf of the wider county because of its advanced stage of development. The expression of interest had to be submitted by 30th September. The process would be that developers make their proposals and the biodiversity will need to be assessed for its current value and what will remain after the development. Any gap must be mitigated either on-site or if this was not possible then the work can be done offsite. NDABS will support the ND Biosphere Foundation, the Tarka Country Trust and the local authorities in the application of the scheme.</p> <p>This initiative is supported by all LAs. The 4 successful pilot areas will be supported by a national team from Natural England. Authorities can still put in place offset policies without the technical support, but would still be part of the Defra study and this would be something to consider if the bid was not successful.</p> <p>Local Nature Partnership. The BR Partnership was highlighted in an amalgamated bid put together across the county by DCC. This bid had failed but may be re-submitted. David Appleton recommended that the Biosphere Reserve Partnership be registered as a 'Local Nature Partnership', without necessarily bidding for funds to develop the LNP. The partnership agreed to this action.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked all concerned for all their hard work on this issue.</p>	<p>completed application</p> <p>AB to circulate the expression of interest when it has been completed.</p> <p>BRP to register as LNP if no other framework exists.</p>

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<p>6.</p>	<p>Election of Vice Chairmen</p> <p>The Chairman thanked RB for all the work he had done as VC and presented him with a gift. He offered RB the new role as the first “Biosphere Reserve Community Ambassador”. This is a two year role, renewable, with the same rights as corresponding members, which RB gracefully accepted.</p> <p>Following the recruitment process based on the criteria agreed by the Partnership, there was a proposal to nominate 3 VCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Wallace • Juliet Bidgood • Martin Wickham <p>The candidates left the room. (Martin Wickham was absent from the meeting)</p> <p>All 3 nominees were voted in unanimously (and according to the constitution, Juliet Bidgood and Martin Wickham become members of the Partnership). The Chair thanked the Partnership for supporting the process and looked forward to working with the new VCs.</p>	<p>Juliet Bidgood, Mark Wallace, Martin Wickham unanimously voted in as Vice Chairmen.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Atlantic Array Position</p> <p>AB briefly introduced the current knowledge about the Atlantic Array regarding the land fall of cables, the range of turbines, the extent of surveys undertaken etc.</p> <p>AB stressed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The BR position statement does not preclude objection ◆ There are still many ‘unknowns’. The likely methods of installation and landfall of cables and the size of the array. <p>Rose Day reiterated that the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would not participate or adhere to the position statement as before.</p> <p>Rodney Cann commented that the photo montages of Fullabrook did not convey the actual size of the turbines at all. He is against the Array and commented that most of the economic benefits would go to Wales while most of the environmental impact would be on North Devon. He said that he can not support the development of the array as it stands.</p>	

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	<p>The partnership agreed that the position statement was more about process rather than support for the project itself and that the wording in the statement should be expressed in a tone that could be interpreted as neither supportive nor against by using terms such as “constructively review” rather than “strongly support”.</p> <p>MM made reference to a useful WWF report “The Energy Report – 100% renewables by 2050”.</p> <p>The Partnership was asked what kind of role the BR team should play with regard to the development, the EIA and the economic impact, given the work that they had done in the past. The Partnership agreed that there was merit in keeping dialogue with the developer and to push for best outcomes for the area in terms of economy and environment. The team were advised to be cautious about interpreting data for the developer.</p> <p>Robert Down suggested that RWE nPower have virtually unlimited resources for this project and that perhaps it would be possible to obtain a grant to do work on behalf of the Biosphere Reserve with the Marine Working Group to help in the assessment of the EIA and the proposals. Possibly to employ someone with the relevant background as a considered response on a voluntary basis is unlikely. This idea was supported.</p>	<p>AB to redraft and circulate for ratification.</p> <p>AB to continue dialogue with RWE.</p> <p>RDown/AB to explore bid for marine support worker.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) funding and the Biosphere Reserve</p> <p>The five FLAGS are Cumbria, North Devon, North Norfolk, Cornwall and Hastings. The FLAG is the fisheries fund version of LEADER –Axis 4. The fund is administered by the Marine Management Organisation. £1.05M has been allocated and this needs to be matched 60:40 overall in the programme.</p> <p>The current interpretation is that 40% match must come from non-public sources. At present this excludes LAs and public bodies such as NE.</p> <p>AB said that other EU states match with local funds and felt that it was important that the same applies in the UK, otherwise many non commercial projects would not get funded.</p> <p>NDABS team have been approached by Devon Maritime Forum to be part of a Devon-wide Marine Education programme to be funded through HLF. If matches are eligible, part of FLAG can go towards this.</p> <p>Members suggested developing a small grants scheme with a cultural dimension –</p>	<p>AB and RDown to keep members updated on the FLAG programme</p>

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	History/Marine could attract lottery funding.	
9.	<p>Biosphere Reserve 10 years Anniversary</p> <p>2012 will be the 10th anniversary of the designation. The AONB's 50th was very successful and we can learn from this. Matt Edworthy asked for their advice. Rose Day and Linda Blanchard reported that the AONB had a dedicated person to do the work leading up to the actual anniversary and both local community engagement officer and national press officer to promote events linked to the anniversary. They also used the SDF to promote the anniversary. Using as much non-tourism season time to warm up the programme was helpful.</p> <p>It is also the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Tarka Trail. Matt asked for ideas from the partnership.</p> <p>Peter Howard suggested raising public awareness of science event (possibly a high profile lecture series. Barb Francis suggested Bideford College as a venue for this. Brian Frazer-Smith suggested sport as it is the Olympic year. Both U3A and the colleges could be important partners.</p> <p>MM suggested the inclusion of Lundy as a core area could be a high level objective.</p> <p><i>A Task Force was established with the following volunteers</i> Mark Wallace, Peter Howard, Richard Butler, Colleges, Petroc, U3A, - RB suggested Martin Wickham.</p>	<p>10 year Celebration should start from November 2012 for 12 months.</p> <p>Agreed to establish a 10 year celebration task force including Mark Wallace, Peter Howard, Richard Butler, Petroc and Bideford Colleges, U3A and Martin Wickham.</p>
10.	<p>Project Updates</p> <p><i>Life's Journey</i> The bid to the HLF has been successful making a total project fund of £76K. We will make Fremington Quay a centre for heritage events and establish a permissive path agreement. There is a funding shortfall and this needs to be underwritten by DCC. Part of the £8400 could be met by a County Council grant from RC and other county councillors. It is hoped the pre-conditions</p>	

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	<p>will be met by October. RB & MM commended the work done by Matt Edworthy.</p> <p><i>Confluence</i> This digital arts project will launch on September 29th at the Pannier Market, with further events on Saturday 1st October in Dolton and Sunday 8th October in Instow. MW invited the partnership to support the road shows and launch events to show solidarity and to use the events and the conduit to meet people.</p> <p><i>Biosphere Action Week (BAW)</i> This is the 2nd BAW and aims to get communities involved with woods, forests and trees as part of the International Year of the Forest. Partners were asked to promote the list of events and attend where possible.</p> <p>Catchment Sensitive Farming CSF is now starting a new two year agreement. The contractor will soon be going out to speak to farmers. This year it will be on the North Devon Streams area to improve bathing water quality at Ilfracombe and Combe Martin specifically. Next year will re-focus on the Torridge, which will also benefit from new soils-for-profit targeted capital grant. The work of CSF generally is going to be followed through with research led by Rob Fish from Exeter University. Dr Fish introduced his background (and his Department's - Centre for Rural Policy Research) in catchment-based work and his contribution to the National Ecosystem Assessment. He highlighted several areas of the BRs work that was a good basis for research.</p> <p>Working Wetlands Peter Burgess presented the Working Wetlands Project and their achievements to date. The 5-yearwork is funded by South west Water, Tubney Trust, Butterfly Conservation Society, Devon Waste Management, Natural England, Devon County Council, Environment Agency, Grantscape, Pipex Ltd, Vospers and Pasquali. The aim is to restore large areas of Culm grassland in 3 cluster areas though land management advice, High Level Stewardship and small capital grants as well as machinery rings and flying herds. Over 213 farms have been visited and 60 ha improved and over 80 County Wildlife sites have been improved to date. The project includes community engagement and training for students. A key area of the work is proving that restoring the hydrological function of the wetlands is of benefit to South West Water who are part funding the programme.</p>	<p>Partners to support the roadshow and launch events</p> <p>Partners to events and attend</p> <p>AB to submit EoI for the</p>

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	<p>EA Catchment Pilot. – Jay Rowntree (EA) introduced the Water Framework Directive challenges coming up to meet the deadline of 43% compliance by 2015 and full compliance by 2027. The Agency and Defra are looking at new ways to achieve compliance through partnerships and third parties carrying out participatory planning for catchments. An in-house pilot scheme for the Environment Agency already exists, but expressions of interest are now being sought for external bodies to carry out catchment planning with Environment Agency support. AB said that Area 48 matches the Biosphere Reserve area but he was advised by the WFD Planning team that it was probably too large to take on. AB suggested that the Partnership put in an Expression of Interest by 30th September to provide a planning pilot for the Taw Catchment, given the Torridge was the focus of the NIA. This was strongly supported.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam The Chair noted the massive expansion of Himalayan Balsam this year and reminded the Partners of Steve Mulberry’s (NT) previous call to action. The priority was to stop further spread, and try to eradicate per sub-catchment. This would require major community mobilisation. All parish councils should be targeted. It was suggested that the AONB could re-prioritise the SDF toward this problem. It was suggested that as part of the CSF project, this problem could be highlighted to farmers during farm visits, with the integrated advice. Fishermen should also be contacted. It was agreed that a task force be set up through the biodiversity working group to agree a programme of action for next year.</p> <p>It was suggested that word would spread very quickly among the farming community if the problem was highlighted on the Archers.</p>	<p>Taw catchment.</p> <p>Small task force to be set up to push the message to the parishes and landowners.</p>
	<p>Date of next meeting Date of next meeting Friday 3rd February 2012</p> <p>Future Meetings Thursday 20th June 2012 Thursday 25th October 2012</p>	

Glossary:

BAW	Biosphere Action Week
CSF	Catchment Sensitive Farming
DWT	Devon Wildlife Trust
EA	Environment Agency
EMP	Estuary Management Plan
EOI	Expression of Interest
ERZ	Ecosystem Restoration Zones as specified in the Lawton Review
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses
IDAT	Institute of Digital art and Technology
LNP	Local Nature Partnership
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zones
MVF	Mole Valley Farmers
NEWP	Natural Environment White Paper
NIA	Nature Improvement Area
NDJ	North Devon Journal
U3A	University of the 3 rd Age
VC	Vice Chairman