

## BIOSPHERE RESERVE PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010  
Henry Williamson Room, Barnstaple Library @ 9.30am

**Members Present:** Mike Moser (Chairman), Robert Down (Coastwise), Lesley Garlick (DCC), Steve Pitcher (North Devon Plus), Peter Howard (Landscape Research Group, Bournemouth University), Cllr. Caroline Chugg (DCC), Steve Mulberry (NT), Mark Wallace (Beaford Arts), Brian Frazer-Smith (DAPC), Miranda Cox (TDC), Jerry Lee (NDC), Mark Jones (Natural England), Richard Butler (Vice Chairman), Richard Knott (Environment Agency), Pat Barker (NDC), Derrick Spear (Tarka Trust), Mike Kelly (NDC), Tim Robbins (North Devon Sea Fisheries)

**Observers/invitees:** Alan Wynn Jones (Dyfi Biosphere), Jane Williams (Bideford Biodiversity Group) Juliette Bidgood (Neat Designs), Mike Kelly (NDC), Andrew Austen (NDC)

**Apologies:** Rose Day (AONB Chairman), Pete Jollands (Biosphere Foundation), DWT, NFU, Bideford College

**NDABS Present:** Andy Bell, Matt Edworthy, Gigha Klinkenborg, Linda Blanchard.

Item	Issues	Action agreed
1. Chairman's Introduction	The Chairman welcomed members to the Biosphere Partnership meeting	
2. Minutes	Minutes agreed	
3. Matters Arising	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p><b>Learning in North Devon's Biosphere UNESCO Biosphere Reserve:</b> This document was approved at the last partnership on 15<sup>th</sup> May subject to member comments. No comments were received other than those at the meeting. The document is now live on the Biosphere website, and the position statement has been prepared.</p> <p>The next stage is for the Partnership's Outreach Group to develop an action plan to support the document. The main intention of this will be to identify specific education priorities for the Partnership over the next 12 -18 months which will see enormous changes in education provision in England as a response to the Con-Lib coalition's policies.</p> <p><b>People and Environment Primary school resources and schemes of work:</b> Teachers from 20 schools across Devon (12 from within the Biosphere Reserve area, 8 from outside) are now using these resources. The figure was 12 in 2009. The Biosphere Reserve is now</p>	

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	<p>part of many hundreds of primary school children's education each year. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, teachers from 11 primary schools (some already using People and Environment resources, some not) will gather at Hallsannery with NDABS and Devon Learning and Development Partnership staff to begin the development of another scheme of work focussed on hedges. This work is funded through the Devon Hedge Group's HLF project.</p> <p><b>Beaford and NDABS schools art project:</b> After a meeting on 01<sup>st</sup> September, we have now confirmed that working together, the Devon Learning and Development Partnership, Beaford Arts, Biosphere Reserve and Schools Library Services will work with schools across Devon on a project to produce art that celebrates our changing environment and the BR accolade, and responds to the Beaford Archive photographic collection and work of James Ravilious. The school's work will be incorporated into a Devon-wide exhibition at the end of the year with key works being auctioned in aid of our twin reserve in Kenya. We expect to launch the Project in October 2010</p> <p><b>Outreach</b></p> <p><b>Parish Council Network and beyond:</b> Engaging with Parish Councils has been difficult as discussed at previous partnerships. We have tried hard to involve the Biosphere Parishes in Biosphere Action Week but have met with very limited responses despite a clearly defined proposition of what we wanted from them and what they could expect from NDABS in return. NDABS will continue to work hard to strengthen relationships with the Parish Councils but must increasingly look to some of the newer kids on the block, the transition movements in particular. There are active sustainability groups in Bideford, Barnstaple and Torrington amongst others that we need to contact and establish a supportive relationship with.</p> <p><b>Biosphere Action Week 25 September to 3<sup>rd</sup> October:</b> First of what we hope to be an annual fixture that gets communities actively supporting the BR. This year's theme is wildlife linked to IYB2010 and we are asking for projects involving communities that benefit wildlife. So far we have promoted the activity to a wide variety of community groups, all Parish councils and through our informal networks and are hoping to generate a significant number of projects (more than 10 is expected, 15 would be a success). To-date, we have 5 solid projects across the BR area (Hartland, Bidefordx2, Winkleigh and Chulmleigh) underway but expect to finalise perhaps double that number in the coming few weeks. NDABS will assist the projects with expertise, small grants if required and promotion/publicity</p>	

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	<p><b>Biosphere Marine Working Group</b>  The marine group is working well and has produced its first set of recommendations for a suite of Marine Conservation Zones in the BR. The chairman thanked Coastwise for the hard work. Iterations of the recommendations will be circulated to the partnership for their comment and endorsement.  North Devon + are in the process of trying to secure a Fisheries Local Action Group for the north Devon area and will be welcoming Biosphere Reserve Partnership involvement if successful. The deadline for submission is 30<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p><b>Position statements on Atlantic Array, Green Economy and Education</b>  Position statements are on the website already. They have already been used to support applications for the Local enterprise Partnership for Devon, Torbay and Plymouth.</p> <p><b>Visitor Investment Programme</b>  AB reported that Peter Jollands from the Foundation has engaged Mishka Losky to speak to businesses. All seem interested but not appropriate to pursue until the end of September.  SWCP have also launched a VIP scheme and we are joining forces and ensuring that there will be no overlaps or competition.</p> <p><b>Estuary Management Plan</b>  Big thanks to Chrissie Dukes for the work carried out on the EMP. The partnership will need to sign it off once it's been through consultation. Approval of the final plan will be via email before the next partnership meeting.</p>	<p><b>AB to circulate recommendations for reserves as they develop.  AB to send a letter of support</b></p> <p><b>AB to circulate the EMP for approval when current stage is complete.</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Dyfi Biosphere Reserve</b>  The chairman introduced Alan Wynn Jones of the Dyfi Biosphere Reserve and thanked Richard Butler for making links between the two reserves.  Alan thanked Andy Bell for his help. He explained that Dyfi Biosphere Reserve is only 20-25% the size of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve. They have 3 local authorities with each governing approximately 1/3 of the land area. These LAs don't always see eye to eye so they have a tough job ahead.  He went on to say that Dyfi has many assets, one of which is that it is a bilingual community. 40% are incomers with a very keen environmental element centred on the Centre for Alternative Technology. They have an official support group, but no core funds, office, telephone or officer. The Welsh Assembly is very supportive. They want to focus</p>	

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	<p>their activity on developing projects with the intention of having 8-10 thematic groups doing the work for the BR. They have targeted local schools and one smaller project is to improve local footpaths.</p> <p>MM and RB are hoping to meet the Dyfi Biosphere Partnership. AB commented that Dyfi was a very good area, well worth visiting.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Future Operational Model for the Biosphere Reserve</b></p> <p>MM introduced the session. Biosphere Reserves are not a statutory designation and, in the current economic climate, funders are looking to make cuts from areas that are not absolutely statutory. NE has already made some cuts that have impacted on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and there may be more.</p> <p>Therefore there is a need to broaden the funding base for the Biosphere Reserve, engage the business sector and plan very carefully for the future.</p> <p>MM wrote on behalf of the partnership to the Defra minister and the response was encouraging, although a visit unlikely in the short-term. MM re-iterated that the partnership should continue to aim for a ministerial visit. All 3 council authorities have been written to in order for them to sustain the pressure and we plan to establish a business task force to work with the private sector.</p> <p><b>New Policy Context for the Biosphere Reserve</b></p> <p><b>Summary:</b> This paper, as presented, set a strategic context for how the Biosphere Reserve can work with the emerging policy changes arising from the coalition government and the expected cuts in public sector funding. These particularly included Big Society and localism.</p> <p>Key themes that were discussed were:</p> <p>Raising the profile of the Biosphere Reserve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ This is important, but need to ensure that this does not compete with partners but underpinned and mutually good work.</li> <li>◆ The brand and identity for the Biosphere Reserve was important. It should be used as an underpinning identity but it was recognised that there was a critical step to get the brand understood and valued by stakeholders. Members were very supportive of a utility value of the brand for Biosphere Reserve Farm Produce to support local producers for example.</li> <li>◆ PH suggested arranging a visit from HRH the Prince of Wales as well as or instead of the Minister.</li> </ul> <p>Clear cost-benefit analysis of the team and the designation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ MJ suggested that it was important to clearly identify and broadcast the costs and</li> </ul>	<p><b>MM to keep pressure with partners for a ministerial visit.</b></p> <p><b>AB to investigate process for Royal Visit</b></p>





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	<p>North Devon and Torridge District Councils have produced a joint Local Development Framework Core Strategy. This has been developed by planning teams from both authorities to ensure that synergies and cross-border issues are dealt with sensibly; at the same time the implementation of the core strategy can be carried out either collectively or independently.</p> <p>The pre-publication of the Joint Core Strategy was developed with some input from the Biosphere Reserve team in NDABS, the resulting strategy uses the Biosphere Reserve to help define the area's specialness.</p> <p><a href="http://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning_policy/jcs/prepub_cs?tab=files">http://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning_policy/jcs/prepub_cs?tab=files</a></p> <p><b>Presentation by Andrew Austen</b></p> <p>This presentation reflected the views of the draft LDF so far and set the key challenges. Views were very supportive of more inclusion of the Biosphere Reserve in the LDF. Keeping the fabric of the environment together was highlighted as an important outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the Biosphere Reserve help delivery of key infrastructure?</li> <li>• How can the Biosphere Reserve deliver more sustainable communities given the rurality of northern Devon?</li> <li>• Green tourism is important to the local economy</li> <li>• Support local distinctiveness of Biosphere Reserve</li> </ul> <p>Key Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking delivery of the Core Strategy to the Biosphere Reserve Strategy</li> <li>• Making the Biosphere Reserve more central to the vision and making the vision more spatial</li> <li>• Identifying 'added value' from the Biosphere Reserve through innovative approaches to deliver an exemplar for sustainable development</li> <li>• Utilising natural systems to address impacts of climate change</li> </ul> <p><b>Presentation by Juliet Bidgood</b></p> <p>This presentation highlighted some of the good practice from other areas such as Freiburg in Germany, Eco trust in Somerset, and social housing the Welsh Future Homes programme in Ebbw Vale. The presentation also introduced the concepts behind the planning brief for Winkleigh Airfield site.</p> <p><b>Presentation by Andy Bell</b></p> <p>AB made a presentation about improving approaches to green infrastructure within the built up areas and how there may be opportunities through the government proposals for Biodiversity offsets.</p>	

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	<p><b>Discussion:</b>  MC said that the challenge was “How do we get across to people that it is not a good idea to fell a wood to build a car park.”  Sustainable housing can be more expensive up front. The pay-back comes very soon during its lifetime.  As a BR, we need to buy/develop spaces, build sustainable housing for the community and get the payback later.  Practical suggestions – develop a spatial portrait of ND through the Biosphere Reserve and how it will be low carbon and ecologically and economically intact.  The Biosphere is locally distinctive and therefore the opportunity to design special policies was appropriate.  Green banking/ ecological policies as a way to ensure the fabric of the BR can be maintained.  MK said that they were already working with NEF and hope that the Biosphere Reserve would come through their work too.  Given the lack of time, the meeting agreed that a specific workshop would be the best mechanism to dedicate the time and energy that the issue deserved.</p>	<p><b>LDF team and AB to organise Workshop by Christmas 2010</b></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b>  SM Himalayan Balsam is increasing in the BR and is a big concern.  SM Dark Skies initiative – we need to encourage this for the Biosphere Reserve. To support ENP. AB replied that Devon County Council is hoping that the Biosphere Reserve might identify communities that would be prepared to reduce street lighting as an example to reduce light pollution and carbon emissions.</p>	<p><b>AB and ME</b> to consider how a support might be engineered through local press.</p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Dates of next meeting</b>  18<sup>th</sup> January 2011  Subject for next meeting – stock take of where we have got to and how we address the remaining 2 years of the strategy.</p> <p>Following meetings:  Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011  Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011</p>	