



## BIOSPHERE RESERVE PARTNERSHIP MEETING Minutes

17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Zoom Meeting

### Members Present:

Andrew Austen (NDC)  
Brett Grosvenor (EA)  
Chris Fuller  
Claire Moodie (PFND)  
Cllr. Derrick Spear (NDC)  
Cllr. Ken James (TDC)  
David Hoare (for Selaine Saxby MP)  
Emma Richardson (DWT)  
Ian Rowland (TDC)  
Jenny Carey-Wood (AONB)  
Jo Traill-Thompson (NE)  
John Balls  
Kirstie Pritchard (DCC)  
Lisa Schneidau (DWT)  
Mark Prior (FC)  
Mark Saunders (NDC)  
Mark Wallace (Beaford)  
Martin Batt (AONB)  
Mel Austen (Chairperson)  
Michael Winter  
Mike Moser (Nature Improvement Group)  
Nigel Sharp  
Peter Howard  
Phil Byers (Vice Chairman & BR Foundation)  
Robert Down  
Simon Browning  
Tim Jones (Biosphere Foundation)  
Tony Collyer (BR Foundation)

### BR Team Present:

Andy Bell  
Adeline Gladieux  
Jane Hart  
Gigha Klinkenborg  
Bryony Paul  
Sophia Craddock  
Phil Metcalfe  
Sarah Jordan

Item	Notes	Actions agreed
<b>1. Chairman's welcome and Introductions</b>	Mel Austen welcomed partners.	

<p><b>2 Apologies &amp; minutes of the last meeting</b></p>	<p>The minutes were agreed.i JCW present for AONB not MBatt</p>	
<p><b>3 Matters arising</b></p>	<p>Andy – Quite a challenging year due to COVID-19. During lockdown we were able to keep most of our programmes going and it gave us the opportunity to catch up a bit, particularly with Woods for Water. When the lockdown was lifted, we had different issues to deal with due to the number of visitors flocking to Devon. We wanted to see how the Biosphere was relevant within the COVID Recovery Plan so some parts of the BCHT project have been amended in terms and what it delivers including a large scale tourism App to help manage those visitors when to do come to the area. Woodland Enterprise Zone bid has been submitted. Also submitted projects for the Digital Biosphere and Smart Biosphere.</p> <p>Climate change and biodiversity crisis response – a lot of our targets and actions were rolled into that particular plan – thanks to Kirstie and Doug Eltham for their help.</p> <p>UNESCO International Coordination Council (MAB) held a virtual meeting. Designated a few more site and withdrew a few less. The network is still growing, now 724 around the world. Plans are being made for next year’s 50th anniversary of the MAB programme. This week UNESCO is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Next year the climate change conference in Glasgow COP26 and we are looking to showcase some of our work then.</p> <p>TJ – asked if there was anything on the Net Zero task force.</p> <p>AB - Quite a few actions from the Woodland Enterprise Zone focus on Net Zero targets and we’ll be looking at other renewable energy projects too. We will</p>	

<p><b>Working Group updates</b></p> <p><b>Marine Pioneer</b></p>	<p>also be updating our position statement on marine renewables.</p> <p>TJ - The report is moving to a point where the conclusive sector specific areas have been identified so the next stage will be the forum hearings. Doug is central to the delivery and there will be participation opportunities. The work by the LSC has produced some useful statistics on job opportunities arising from the Net Zero agenda. We could circulate some of the summary papers for partners.</p> <p>KP also mentioned the draft Devon Carbon Plan is out for consultation from the 7th December.</p> <p>MS mentioned that members and officers TDC, NDC meeting with MMoser, ABell and other to discuss actions arising from the BR manifesto and the Councils Climate Emergency declaration</p> <p>AB – The marine group has now produced the Marine Natural Capital Plan – big thanks to Chrissie Ingle and Rose Stainthorpe for their work. It has been quite a process and features enhancing the stocks and Nat Cap assets, understanding the benefits and values etc. the backbone is the asset and risk register which is the first and most intense in the marine environment. Several data sets were pulled together from the University of Plymouth and ourselves to map the marine environment. Looking at the condition and our state of knowledge of these ones. What are the risks and how would you manage those. Now online on a geonode database so we are trying to make sure all the information we get is openly accessible to all the various stakeholders. We discovered that the Clovelly Herring is different genetically from the rest of the herring in the Bristol channel. Now we are looking to find out where and when they spawn so that we</p>	<p><b>TJ or AB to circulate to partners?</b></p>
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<p><b>Landscape Pioneer</b></p>	<p>can protect their breeding grounds and protect the fishery in the long term.</p> <p>A lot of work in the Estuary. Associate with this is the SLAM project and heavily modified water body. We have been looking at how climate change will affect the shape and functions of the different types of salt marsh of the estuary in years to come and what it will mean for manages realignment. In particular in the upper reaches. What does that mean for flood defence management?</p> <p>The scheme we put in at Instow at the end of March to extend the dunes and stop the sand from encroaching onto the road. It is pleasing to see that it has help up reasonably well after the storms at the weekend. The dunes are beginning to vegetate well the only problem is some water holding at the back of the dunes.</p> <p>Next step for the marine group is to look at blue investment and Coordinated Response for Intertidal in the Taw Torridge Estuary Response - CRITTER project – linking water quality and intertidal restoration which ties in with flood defence works. We need to establish and maintain the governance of the marine area so need to put a coordinator in place as soon as we can. We had a discussion with MMO and IFCA about the Fisheries and Marine Research Management plans and how they are now part the marine fisheries bill so we are now ahead of the curve.</p> <p>TJ - Appledore shipyard has now changed hands. Now known as Harland and Wolff, Appledore. Want to be involved in all the environmental projects connected to the long-term health of the estuary.</p> <p>JCW – Nat Cap Plan should be publicised a bit more.</p> <p>JTT – Slides Main messages from the LP is the top ten lessons contain a huge amount</p>	
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<p><b>Catchment Group</b></p>	<p>of detail. The important part is they have fed directly into DEFRA policy which is now being discussed in clauses in the environment bill.</p> <p>DEFRA has recognised the importance of partnership working, demonstrated by the work in the Biosphere and the wide range of partners. The importance of governance and local planning is key to the 25 YEP. The four Pioneers have made it clear that the world wasn't ready for a Nat Cap approach but is ready for something like the local nature recovery strategies. My role is leading the piloting the clauses in the bill across 5 pilots in England - Cornwall, Buckinghamshire, Greater Manchester, Cumbria, and Northumberland. A really great outcome.</p> <p>The main part of the local nature recovery strategy will be those statement of biodiversity priorities.</p> <p>The lessons are being written up and will be published soon.</p> <p>Integrated whole farm business and natural capital planning with 28 farmers having been recruited to the Trial. Five each in both Hartland and Wistlandpound nine each in both Taw &amp; Torridge Farmers really value opportunity to feed into ELM design. The key constraint to consideration of any major habitat creation/ woodland planting/commitment to environmental delivery is need for flexibility – the situation is too uncertain to commit to anything long-term.</p> <p>We have had good engagement and will continue until end of May 2021</p> <p>LS - 1-day workshop on challengers and choices was all about the next round of WFD. Had a successful event in February – sent in a big consultation response to EA on behalf of the Catchment Partnership and Biosphere 0 on the BR website. Partners are encouraged to read this.</p>	
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Since then, the EA have published 2019 data. Not good reading – not seeing improvement on a lot of water bodies. Declines in condition reflected across the country. North Devon still has water quality problems due to intensive agriculture and diffuse pollution and sewage/waste treatment. A lot still to be tackled. The EA have been working very hard.

Existing water quality projects from DWT Working Wetlands project - just started another 5-year round of work.

Culm Grassland NFM project which is ending March 2021 – PHd likely to publish around Sept 2021.

DWT team are working with landowners and partners and exceeded targets – successfully restored over 380Ha of culm grassland and recreated over 90Ha wet grassland habitat across the area in the last 4 years.

Torrige River Restoration project extended until September next year.

Torrige Facilitation project runs to end of June.

SC - Akland & North Devon Focus area projects – both aim to improve water quality and mitigate against the effects of flooding.

Various NFM measure have been installed – leaky log dams, hedgebanks, and new woodlands.

The project is now in year 3  
The hedgebanks are effective at holding back surface flows.

Half a Ha of woodland planted by Pledge for Nature volunteers in February this year before COVID,  
Monitoring continues with WRT.

North Devon Focus Area project on Rye and Chelfham Streams in 6th and final year – to improve shellfish populations in the Estuary.

<p><b>Woodland Working Group</b></p>	<p>PM - Devon and Cornwall Soil Alliance launched by WRT in June 2019 to build capacity in soils advice. Severn feasibility reports will be produced – including Farm visit work across catchments. Investigation soil conditions, risks of soil loss, and potential remedial action to improve soil health across the Knowl water catchment. Findings to be presented in the New Year.</p> <p>Kenwith valley NFM project – has been identified as catchment that would benefit from NFM measures including tree planting, small flood storage areas, and improved soil management. NFM strategies harness environmental processes and work with local landscapes to hold and slow runoff. A good influence of lowering the risk of flooding downstream.</p> <p>A number of agreements have been secured with landowners and currently in the process of tree planting and installation of NFM measure to be completed this winter.</p> <p>LS Next catchment partnership on 16th December.</p> <p>Working with EA to identify project for WEIF funding and their flood risk section. We will be working with a lot of partners to ensure that we don't compete for the same funding.</p> <p>Project developing called North Devon Natural solutions – hoping it will be a broad partnership. We have applied for match from the Green Recovery Challenge fund.</p> <p>The North Devon Catchment Partnership is broadening – inviting a number of new members – no response from NFU yet. We do have SWW joining and both Tav &amp; Torridge fisheries associations.</p> <p>MP – Gov commitment to plant 30,000Ha within 5 years. Nature for Climate fund £640m trees and peat. Tree strategy consultation completed and coming out after Christmas.</p>	
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<p><b>Nature Improvement Group</b></p>	<p>Work Horizon 2020 and EFI (FOREX Network) applications both unsuccessful. Will be revamped for future bids. The ENP and BR and FC joint woodland science project works ongoing – site visits have been reduced due to COVID situation. Riparian tree planting EA Funded project – hope to get announcement soon from No 10. The BIRD forest project - Small-scale tree planting pilot project during the period from November 2020 to March 2021.</p> <p>SC – Just begun working on combe Martin this month on BIRD project with SWW to plant 30Ha over the next three year to protect bathing water quality. Working with NE and EA and consulting the AONB Lots of interest from key landowners.</p> <p>Woods for Water - Funded by WEG until March 2021 to plant 90ha of new woodland to improve water quality and to mitigate against flooding in key catchments - 130ha of woodland planting on 66 holdings.</p> <p>AB – SWEEP programme - working with University of Exeter. Developing a way to monito changes in forest using satellite and lidar data which will detect areas of felling/canopy change. Will be able to update quarterly with synthetic aperture radar data from European satellites. We’re working with FC to monitor adherence to felling licences and illegal felling.</p> <p>BP – Pledge for Nature – Website and pledge map working well – over 170 pledged ranging from tree planting to installing hedgehog houses in gardens. Three projects currently ongoing: Community orchards – offering grants to schools and villages for orchard planting - supported by local councils.</p>	<p><b>AB to circulate copies of slides to partners</b></p>
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Kestrel nest box giveaway – for landowners – 20 to give away in December

Christmas Nature challenge – asking people to make nature friendly decisions this Christmas – big social media push which partners can help with.

MM – last NIG meeting in March just before lockdown. Did a review of the functioning of the group and made a few adjustments. Looking at the development of our nature plan. An assessment of root causes of nature decline across the BR has been completed. Have begun working on the Nature Plan. There will be two levels, firstly an internal Nature Plan to drive the BR's work on nature recovery. Then a more external 'manifesto' to communicate our higher level goals, principles, and vision.

This may take the form of a leader's pledge for nature – similar to the UN pledge for nature recovery. Our PM committed to 30% of our landscape be protected.

Working group established to begin work in the next month – thanks expressed to Emma Richardson, Lisa Schneidau from DWT, Brett and Maris Baron from EA plus Andy –

4 principles are:

1. Make space for nature, restore ecosystem functionality, increase landscape dynamism and address the root causes of nature's decline
2. Prioritise nature-based solutions using natural processes over engineered solutions to deliver greater resilience and co-benefits for the climate emergency (carbon sequestration and climate change adaptation)
3. Support communities, and particularly farmers/landowners, to be at the heart of nature's recovery, working alongside environmental, private and public sector organisations.

4. Promote an increase in overall biodiversity for all built development and pursue nature improvements from economic and leisure activities across all habitats

Two goals developed:

1. Primary Goal: By 2030, 30% of land within the Biosphere is semi-natural biodiversity-rich habitat in good or recovering condition
2. Secondary Goal: By 2030, nature recovery has been integrated into the management of the remaining 70% of land within the Biosphere

Five working groups to be established to work on various actions -

Introduction – purpose, root causes and trends, benefits

Vision and Goals

Principles/approaches including Nature Recovery Network

The five action plans

1. Wetlands and waterbodies (rivers, streams, open water, ponds and marshes, blanket bog and culm grassland)
2. The wooded environment (broadleaved and coniferous woodland, wood-pasture, orchards, hedgerows)
3. Grassland, pasture and arable
4. Coast (heaths, cliffs and dunes)
5. Towns, villages, brownfield and gardens

Implementation and Evaluation

Budget and funding

Had good discussions with AONB chair and JCW re 'Coast' so that we can integrate with the work they are doing.

Farming/landowning focus group

Representatives of farming/landowning groups to advise on all aspects of the plan (eg. NFU,



<p><b>Plastic Free North Devon</b></p>	<p>Demonstration projects at Braunton Countryside Centre.</p> <p>Simonsbath &amp; Exmoor - Ashcombe Centre developing with ENP – COVID has meant we’ve had delays in the work with Lundy and woodland tourism works we wanted to do in the Taw Valley and RHS Rosemoor.</p> <p>The Charters collectively across the four BR sites. Focus Group has helped to develop them. They are tied in to making commitments, to conservation, sustainable development and awareness raising. PFND will be picking up on some of the work.</p> <p>The new logo is trademarked so is protected as a ‘brand’.</p> <p>In return , businesses get free advertising and interactive storymap, free use of the logo and invitations to networking events. Also the opportunity to ‘Star’ business of the month. Sarah has put a huge amount of work into it. She’s done a really great job corralling these business in.</p> <p>CM – Our bid to Climate Action Fund was unsuccessful. We were trying to spread our net too far with over 30 involved. They had received over 640 applications. Lessons learned – Both plastics and climate change need separate, independent resources.</p> <p>No meeting sine March due to COVID.</p> <p>We will set up a member meeting in January to look at the action plan and the state of current resources. We will try and foster a more public facing approach with an assembly/steering group in January.</p>	<p><b>SC – circulate are map</b></p>
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<p><b>Research Group</b></p>	<p>We have been able to deliver projects. The consortium supported the Northern Devon Visualisation survey with over 80-0 responses. JCW also working hard to help produce the report. Really interesting and positive.</p> <p>Referendum called Protect our Playground, proposing to ban cheap polystyrene belly boards. Working with local Councillors, Seline Saxby and Geoffrey Cox support the campaign. We launched a rental scheme for wooden belly boards as a pilot. Plan to expand next year. This coincides with the lobbying part which we will take to both councils in January. It will be voluntary, not legal requirement. The councils will write to supermarkets to ask them to stop selling them as well.</p> <p>Virtual Reality 360 Filming - funded by the AONB SDF grant and Garfield Weston will be used as a powerful engagement tool through our ambassador programme.</p> <p>Beach school programme development</p> <p>Visitor campaign</p> <p>PFND COVID friendly water bar – utilised at the AONB Marathon/Croyde ocean triathlon</p> <p>#looklocal campaign</p> <p>Online directory of local suppliers/producers</p> <p>PFND Business bites.</p> <p>Development of Business auditing and support</p> <p>'Don't even think about' poster education campaign – working with NDDC</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>Current main core funding ends in April</p> <p>Focus on building local Business sponsorship/funding</p> <p>Christmas cleanse and clean fundraiser.</p> <p>MW – Lots of delays due to COVID - TDC survey on tourism around Braunton Burrows area is on hold for now. Project on Ruby Country to do with Public engagement over livestock and climate change postponed. Hope to have citizens jury before next April. The Land between the Moors also delayed – almost</p>	
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<p><b>Fishing issues</b></p> <p><b>Breakout session</b></p>	<p>complete. BCHT - large research element to that – some work has been delayed. The big impact is we didn't spend all the money on T&amp;S so we were able to employ a researcher who will also carry out a survey with tourism business in the area. We have also been looking at the impact of COVID on food businesses and farming.</p> <p>MA – SWEEP Investing in Nature for health – stakeholder led webinar series – look on the website. A lot of work on the health benefits of natural environment.</p> <p>Natures Tonic -</p> <p>JB</p> <p>How has COVID Impacted your/our work for sustainable development and what should, can the BR partnership do to adjust to the situation?</p> <p>Comments: General effects on Organisation:</p> <p>WRT: Monitoring shutdown initially and lots of protocols had to be put in to be Covid Safe. Following lots of news campaigns, Water Framework directive, James Bevan and Connecting the Culm project they've had a lot of interest in Citizen Science. Lockdown gave a chance to look at more strategic plans.</p> <p>EA: Initial impact on monitoring. Going forward: Green Recovery political will is essential to aligning effort and partnership work with strategic plans and policies is critical. Working with North Devon Futures: MPs, CEOs and LAs is important for build back better. Business natural capita investment case. Formation of impact bond. Digital economy and Big data. Green Infrastructure. Innovation in comms and technology.</p> <p>BR Partnership meetings:</p>	
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<p><b>Foundation Progress</b></p>	<p>Could people record the webinars beforehand instead of presenting so much at the time.  More regular and shorter, opportunity to focus on projects for longer.  Webinars are great for attendance and reducing travel which is related to carbon efficiency/neutrality of projects.  <u>Impact on BR/changes</u></p> <p>Anti-social behaviour from people coming to area for first time, how to reach a whole new audience  -Rubbish/damage left behind  – illegal felling</p> <p><u>What should we be doing in response?</u>  Need to educate visitors better – how interact with nature and how countryside works  So new awareness of nature and value of Biosphere  Sources for schools to educate children and remind them – Biosphere could lead on educational materials and expand from plastics  Signs on A38 bridges</p> <p><u>Impact on BR/changes</u></p> <p>Use of video-conferencing – likely to remain post-Covid-19, as so time efficient</p> <p><u>What should we be doing in response?</u></p> <p>Series of shorter – single issues meetings  E.g., frequent 1 hour session, once a month  X2 plus breakout rooms – to choose from  Write up details and send in, post events</p> <p>So more interactive to allow decision making.</p> <p>TJ – 4 buckets/hoppers!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural Capital incubator</li> <li>2. Impact fund</li> <li>3. Commercial services</li> <li>4. Partnership projects</li> </ol> <p>An investment strategy has been developed to potentially see what we need to be ready for. Investment consultant advised that we should be fit for purpose of around £50m fund and</p>	
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develop the capacity to bid into other funding opportunities. The working group has been looking at any opportunities that might become available such as the Get Building Fund. The Government allocated funding to the LEPs to circumvent some of the effects of COVID and stimulate activity. We are on a shortlist of 5. It is an opportunity to develop the first digital Biosphere and huge benefits to partnership working.

Woodland Enterprise Zone is a very significant project and we will revisit from other funding sources – private sector rather than public sector.

BG - Governance issues – we are looking at corporate structure and meeting due diligence for managing capital funds. Regulations and other aspects of the risk register are top priorities in the way we are working. The business cases and business plans behind these revenue generating entities is at the heart of the plans. We are looking at innovative funding and impact bonds to support partners in their endeavours. All the prioritised projects and activities are commercially sound. Will communicate progress as soon as possible. 27:40

AB – The foundation is here to help all the partners and the Impact Investment Fund is for ALL partners to use.

MM – To what extent are you looking at carbon funds as a key option? The BR is operating at a large enough scale in order to bid to private sector and carbon funds already available.

ER – Please give examples of revenue generating activities that you are looking at?

TJ – Carbon Sequestration – more sophisticated than planting trees, - repurposing of agriculture, no tillage, bio-cropping, looking at inter-tidal areas and marine assets. One example is planting an



<p><b>Position on Marine Renewable Energy</b></p>	<p>area within the inter-tidal zones for 200ha seagrass.</p> <p>AB – Last position statement is around 10 years old – The ‘Atlantic Array’ was quite a contentious project. Things have moved on considerably since then and climate has moved up the agenda. The marine area now has numerous MCZs and protections. The sea is quite busy with cables and there are now new marine cables between here and Ireland and Widemouth and Africa. These have put constraints on fishing activity and have an impact on marine wildlife. We want to take the approach to look at all these, and we did The Marine Natural Capital Plan which was trying to look at things holistically and we want to maintain that approach. The latest technology that has been rolled out is a ‘tethered wind’ array. They are anchored to the bed by long chains rather than pile driven turbines. The pilot area could extend to Lundy. A robust, scientific approach is required to make this as good as possible and minimise the negatives.</p> <p>Suggest we adopt a similar approach to the previous position but want more detailed views, particularly from the marine stakeholders. We ensure the project is well researched and look at the indications of co-locations. We should continue to work with stakeholders and then prepare a new position statement.</p> <p>No definitive proposal yet, but the Government’s stated policy on investment in offshore wind and the policy to get to net zero by 2050 means something will happen in this area.</p> <p>TJ – Three reasons this will not ‘go away’/ Government Policy Technology has moved on considerably so it won’t be the old project of 275 turbines – it will be a much smaller array of larger turbines.</p>	
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	<p>The price has gone down from £150 per megawatt hour to somewhere around the low £50 mark.</p> <p>MW – at a recent UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee we looked at this issue – slides were presented – good idea to let AB have a look at them. They looked in detail at the environmental implications of offshore wind and mitigations etc. It’s a complex issue.</p> <p>MB – A critical point is that the landscape and seascape is protected – it’s likely the AONB would object if any turbines were visible from the land. The technology exists now to put turbine further out and out of sight.</p> <p>AB – The Government is going to produce a new climate action plan in which wind is their favoured and their preferred option will be offshore wind. We need to be ready for it. Last time it did take us by surprise and the AONB was firmly against it purely and the landscape impact. There wasn’t any analysis on the benefits or disbenefits.</p> <p>DH – We must look at floating offshore wind very differently to the Atlantic Array. It’s a very different technology so we shouldn’t use the term Atlantic Array. A lot will be closer to Wales than us. There is Celtic Sea joint working going ahead a new APPC working in the whole of the Bristol channel area</p> <p>MB – What size are the floating tubines? THE AA proposal was for 200m turbines, Fullbrook is 110m.</p> <p>It is not the same as the AA. It is completely different proposal.</p> <p>This will be discussed with the MWG more fully, looking at the science before preparing the draft position statement.</p>	<p><b>MW/MA to ask to share slides with AB</b></p>
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	<p>MA - It's not just about what happens offshore, it is also about what happens onshore and where the lines come ashore.</p> <p>AOB – Position statement – important that all parties have a deep discussion.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> <b>MWG will set up a meeting so that all parties can input.</b></p>
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