



BIOSPHERE RESERVE PARTNERSHIP MEETING Minutes

**Thursday 18th February 2016
High Bickington Community Centre @ 13.30.**

Members Present:

Michael Winter (Chairman)
 Lesley Garlick (Devon County Council)
 Peter Howard (Landscape Research Group)
 Andrew Austen (NDC)
 Phil Byers (Chamber of Commerce)
 Mike Moser (Nature Improvement Area)
 Laurence Couldrick (WRT)
 Jenny Carey-Wood (AONB)
 Steve Pitcher (AONB Chairman)
 Eirene Williams (PETROC)
 Gaye Tabor (Community Forum)
 Nick Kirsop-Taylor (University of Exeter)
 Tony Pratt (TTEF)
 Pete Jollands (Biosphere Foundation)

Bruce McFarlane (TDC)
 Mark Prior (FC)
 Lisa Schneidau (DWT)
 Richard Butler (BR Ambassador)

BR Team Present:

Andy Bell
 Tom Hynes
 Matt Edworthy
 Sarah Barr
 Gigha Klinkenborg

Item	Issues	Action agreed
1. Introduction and comments from the Chairman	<p>The Chairman made introductions and welcomed Partners.</p> <p>Matt Edworthy Matt will be taking up a position for 3 days a week as Director of the Gaia Trust starting in April and is intending to reduce his Biosphere days to two. This is subject to agreement with DCC in line with Flexible Working procedures.</p> <p>Externalisation of the Biosphere Team MWinter suggested that members should commend the team for coping well with uncertainty around budget cuts and externalisation discussions. The Partnership are extremely grateful to TDC for not cutting anything and to NDC and DCC for not cutting too much this year. However much work needs to be done on external funding (see Item 5) and CMG will need to look at further governance options.</p>	
2. Apologies	<p>Mark Wallace (Vice-Chairman and Beaford Arts) Christine Goddard (Natural England) Tony Collier (BR Foundation) Rodney Cann (NDC) Brett Grosvenor (EA) Robert Down (Coastwise) Caroline Chugg (DCC)</p>	

Item	Issues	Action agreed
3. Minutes	Minutes were agreed. Attendees were amended	
4. Matters arising	<p>a) Signage MW wrote to Phill Norrey regarding signage – ongoing.</p> <p>b) Periodic Review and Boundary Changes – we are awaiting views of ICC and International Advisory Committee for BR from Lima.</p> <p>c) CABA and CPAF LC gave a short progress report – some events have been held – questions were mainly on Countryside Stewardship and cross compliance issues. We need to pull the action plan together and feed into the River Basin Liaison Panel. CPAF - habitat restoration in the lower Taw. An action plan has been developed based on the 2015 Water Framework Directive to be completed at the end of the financial year. There are ten top priorities based around Catchment Sensitive Farming and managing invasive species. The Catchment Fund may not continue so we are trying to include the work in other projects. Drawing together the action plan for a funding strategy. It has been fed back into the river basin liaison panel at the regional level. Catchment Partnership Action fund is also developing the peer to peer networking and getting the farmers to ask the questions. There have been good workshops on cross compliance.</p> <p>NIA – the main projects are underway. Freshwater Pearl Mussel project – applying for a licence from NE to replicate a captive hatchery since the glochidia failed this year Facilitation Fund – has started but getting good attendance has been tough.</p> <p>Culm Grassland Interreg Bid– a flood-risk project on the potential for culm to hold floodwater is in development at the moment. It will involve more research on protection, enhancement and the increase of culm. Interreg bid for a 4-year project to include 2 project officers will be submitted in May.</p> <p>Funding needs to be a priority for the Steering Group. MM & LS will be attending a one-day meeting in London to discuss the date and the impact of NIA and have been invited to input into the Defra 25 year Environment Strategy.</p> <p>Catchment Sensitive Farming – Very good</p>	<p>Circulate concept brief of interreg Culm project. LS/ER</p> <p>LS circulate the integrated monitoring framework.</p>

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	<p>this year with Abi making the biggest number of site visits. The CSF report has been submitted – the officer has been very successful as has the Partnership</p> <p>A short film on constructed wetlands being produced by Butterfly Effect Films –focussing on 3 farmers that we have worked with.</p> <p>There is to be a Councillor visit around the Biosphere to highlight things the team have been doing and to launch the Biosphere Strategy.</p> <p>Sustainable Energy Group: no meeting with everyone in the energy group together yet. 361 Energy – fuel poverty awareness event next week at the Castle Centre.</p> <p>Press around electric cars and sustainable transport – ‘Co Cars’ (car sharing) scheme to encourage people to take part.</p> <p>Marine Issue: Collaborative work with Lundy and AONB SDF for a Wildlife Code of Conduct which has enabled training of 12 skippers who run trips for wildlife watchers. They are now Nationally Accredited.</p> <p>2 New MCZs designated – new species identified in Ilfracombe – May get added to Tranche 3 – not a high priority.</p> <p>Forest & Woodland Enterprise Zone – a good woodland meeting to promote capital grants through Leader.</p> <p>LEP - £2m bid for Devon.Focus on public sector and community buildings –briefing paper circulated.</p> <p>Collaboration with Exmoor National Park – smarter working with their HLF woodland project to restore ancient semi natural woodlands.</p> <p>Woodland Facilitation fund – priority habitats 490 landowners contracted – over 50 signed up. Lots on cross compliance.</p> <p>NE requires evidence of workshops – submission on March 18th.</p> <p>LC reported a rumour about a Pathfinder project to be announced in North Devon. MWinter will try and find out about ‘Pathfinder’.</p> <p>Community Groups – Life on the Verge – wildlife benefit, connecting habitats. DCC highways only concentrate of the H&S aspect of verge management. And there is no Devon-wide funding.</p>	<p>Circulate briefing note on the bid to the Low carbon ESIF</p> <p>MWinter to investigate the Pathfinder project.</p>

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	<p>The Community Forum will meet to decide which elements of the BR Strategy they will focus on. GT reported that it was a very enthusiastic meeting.</p> <p>DCC will provide free training for volunteers. We need to include a Chalara action plan. The success DCC bid to the LSTF enabled £15k for the Tarka Trail improvements such as new interpretation and renewing the audio posts.</p> <p>The new interpretation in the Railway Carriage at Bideford Station is on target to be ready for April.</p> <p>Replacement of the wave shelter has been a struggle – working with Petroc students we designed a tyre and rammed earth structure. As it is non-standard, it required a structural engineer to sign it off before DCC will take responsibility for it.</p> <p>Mobility scooter will move to Torrington Cycle Hire.</p>	
5.	<p>Budget & Externalisation of the Biosphere Team</p> <p>Externalisation of the team is still under discussion through CMG. However moving it over to a sustainable footing requires the team to place successful external funding bids.</p> <p>BR Partnership has an accord in the new terms of reference to work together for the good of the BR designation. Being part of the Partnership does not negate individual organisations have their 'own view'.</p> <p>Team agreed to drop down to 4 days a week therefore keeping the skills of everyone. However, now Matt will be taking up a 3 days a week position with the Gaia Trust from the beginning of April. Andy, Tom and Gigha will have to prioritise work and backfill some of the communications work. If we don't get funding bids in 6 months' time we will have to revisit this. We should not underestimate the effect a 20% loss will make.</p> <p>We need a better mechanism for tracking funding. LC shared the tool that he uses and offered to send a copy to AB. The next meeting we will have a Pipeline tracker and targets for fundraising.</p> <p>North Devon is by far the best performing BR. Our case study is being used as a model.</p>	<p>AB to prepare a tracking budget for the partnership and Core management Group</p>
6.	<p>Strategic funding plan and working group reporting</p> <p>From April 2016 the BR Foundation will have funds to employ a bid writer for possible marine/forestry etc. project.</p> <p>Working groups need to meet to decide now. JCW said it is important to have the pipeline projects to give an incentive and maintain momentum.</p> <p>It is important that the projects are prioritized. The funding strategy is for the Biosphere Reserve not</p>	<p>AB to circulate the action plan and prepare the draft programmes for partnership to prioritise at the next meeting.</p>

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	<p>just the Biosphere Reserve team, therefore the funding tracker will identify those that support the core team or not.</p>	
7.	<p>Anaerobic Digestion position statement</p> <p>We had a request from District Councils to have a position statement for AD – paper included and presentation by Sarah Barr.</p> <p>Thanks to Sarah for a really useful paper and well presented on the pros and cons of AD.</p> <p>LC - Need to get statistics for each AD plant. (stats on DECC website)</p> <p>PB – There are several issues with South Molton plant. The location is critical as this can be seen for miles around. There are massive tractors shipping in straw are destroying the hedgebanks and agricultural land is being used to store feedstock for the plant. The LA needs to monitor and enforce in some way. Pre-commencement planning conditions have not been met.</p> <p>The growing of maize is problematic. It is a high risk crop and many farmers and contractors are unaware of the mitigation needed. Therefore the policy should steer away from Purpose grown crops. Germany has large nitrate problem in rivers from energy crops.</p> <p>AA warned that the planning system has no control over which crops are grown.</p> <p>NKT advised that food waste contracts tend to be large and therefore very hard for AD plants to buy into.</p> <p>Circulate AD map and DECC link to Partnership.</p> <p>SP – Criteria based policies created for wind energy should apply to AD.</p>	<p>Sarah Barr</p> <p>Circulate the DECC link to the partnership for the volumes for each AD plant.</p> <p>Identify what volume of food waste is available.</p> <p>Develop landscape criteria as in the wind energy policy</p> <p>Consider the grid connections and the excess heat and CHP unit delivery.</p> <p>Policy should divert away from purpose grown crops.</p> <p>Suggest planning conditions for LAs to use.</p>
8.	<p>d) Interreg Biocultural Heritage Tourism</p> <p>Biocultural Tourism – people’s links with the environment, sea or land. – Residents and visitors</p> <p>PH said focus on locals and the visitors will also enjoy it.</p> <p>LS – There is work to link the Tarka trail with Hatherleigh. Tourism and the environment and the arts as a core sector to develop community and place based tourism.</p> <p>AA suggested linking it to Green infrastructure and food and land connections.</p> <p>MWinter suggested working with Tim Wilkinson from his department. And suggested that plant based tourism, wild plants, botany, garden and domestic plants (Rosemoor) etc will be a good link. Local food production links – North Devon locally branded food.</p>	<p>AB to pursue Interreg based on the plant linked tourism and culture.</p>

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9.	<p>UKMAB</p> <p>Dublin Bay BR nomination and adoption last April 4th world congress in Lima – over 1000 attendees expected.</p> <p>UK linkage with Geoparks as the new UNESCO designation might be considered. N Devon already collaborates with English Riviera Geopark.</p> <p>Galloway & South Ayrshire BR doing well.</p> <p>IoM potential BR – submission is in for the whole island. If successful, the next UKMAB will be in the IoM.</p> <p>Galloway will be hosting a Biosphere Reserve networking conference next year, the first since north Devon in 2002. The funding is in place.</p>	
10.	AOB	
11.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>19th July</p>	