

BIOSPHERE RESERVE PARTNERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

26th September 2023

COTIE Building, Petroc, Sticklepath, Barnstaple

1) Welcome and Introductions	<p>Present: Mel Austen (MA), Plymouth University, Chair Andy Bell (AB) NDBF Kay Willmott (KW) NDBF Tim Jones (TJ) Foundation chairman Trustee NDBF Martin Slocombe (MS) 361 Energy Phil Byers (PB) BCoC Robert Down (RD) NDBF Trustee & Coastwise Mark Wallace (MW) Beaford Bill Blythe (BB) Petroc Nicola Corrigan (NC) NDBF Sarah Jordan (SJ) NDBF Jack Harty (JH) Kingsley School Claire Moody (CM) PFND Lily Dunkley 361 Energy</p> <p>By Zoom Eirene Williams (EW), AONB Pru Maskell (PM) Devon County Council Kate Hind (KH) Devon County Council Ed Jenner (EJ) NDBF Ian Roland (IR), TDC Hattie Severinsen (NFU) Emma Richardson (DWT) Fiona Rew DCC rep NFU Mark Kentell NDDC Emma Magee (EA) Mike Moser (MM) Nature Recovery Group Helen Vines (HV) CAG</p> <p>Apologies: Chris Fuller Katrina Stephenson Cllr Stave Harding Sean Kearney Selaine Saxby Michael Winter</p> <p>Thanks to all who were attending the meeting and for all reports submitted.</p>
2) Minutes of last meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that the meeting minutes were a true representation of the matters discussed.

<p>3) Matters arising</p>	<p>North Devon Biosphere Foundation restructuring progress (TJ) The appointment of the new CEO was made, but unfortunately the applicant had to withdraw due to health issues. The two other shortlisted candidates have been approached to be reconsidered in the application process along with another new candidate with an environmental background. Interviews are to be held on Thursday 28th September. All available for immediate start.</p> <p>Periodic Review (AB) The review needs to be submitted by September 2025, we need to start looking at zonation and strategy for that soon.</p> <p>Marine Programme (AB) EA 3C's money has been signed off. We are now able to interview and appoint with guaranteed funding until March 2024, using reserve funds if necessary to bridge any gaps until the funding is available. We have good candidates that have been waiting since the advert went out earlier in the year who are still available and still interested in the post, we will interview next week.</p>
<p>4) Kingsley School on developing the youth involvement (Jack Harty)</p>	<p>Supported by PowerPoint attached to minutes. JH presentation showed how he could support and encourage participation from young people in Biosphere area and is happy to provide time and resources to look at developing the link with schools. Kingsley School would be a good ambassador for biosphere with the Earth Centre as a resource to explore how people under 25 years can become involved in the biosphere. Perhaps as some type of citizens assembly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ideas and trying stuff, and 2. encouraging wider engagement within state and independent partnership – and invitation for the whole education sector to engage. <p>BB – North Devon Futures are in agreeable to get a wider school audience and will support getting it up and running. Number of members of the partnership engaging with partnerships to compare what has and hasn't worked in the past to help with engagement. EW the period on the partnership as school representative should be fixed, so that other schools get the opportunity to be involved. MA 2 +2 years allowing inclusivity. JH to act as co-ordinator for both private and state sectors. The resources available at Kingsley would be available to all and JH would be the conduit to getting schools interested in deeper connections. MA welcomed the proposal with enthusiasm to cover and engage the whole North Devon school community for the next 2+2 years.</p> <p>ACTION – Proposal from Kingsley school to be approved subject to suggestions from the partnership. ACTION BB to include Kingsley School in North Devon Futures KW SHARE POWERPOINT</p>
<p>5) Introduction from Community Action Group(CAG) Devon</p>	<p>Supported by PowerPoint presentation attached to minutes. Website Home - CAG Devon CAG is a CIC that has been commissioned by DCC (Leah Nudds & Helen Vines) via Resource Futures Supporting community projects to reduce, reuse, recycle, share, repair, compost and be sustainable communities across Devon although not in the north at present. Cag provides help with setting up groups, offering resources for getting started. CAG has a social as well as environmental impact and is trying to build a relationship with wider Devon. 11th Nov a Skill Share Day in Cullompton Community Centre. CAG is trying to add value to what is happening in North Devon, not replicating it. It is a supporting group not a dependency. ACTION CAF – CAG is not named in the bid for CAF but has expressed an interest in working with he projects, it's here to support. It will complement the work of the partners.</p>

6) Wilder Communities progress (Emma Richardson DWT)	Wilder communities are about empowering communities, supporting not leading groups, the main goal to engage people to community lead action. Initiatives include - Wildlife Garden Award – Business and individual. Wild Communities Awards – recognition not competition MW – trends in communities is accelerating, growth in community involvement is huge and in high demand. TJ – scaled into mental health initiative.
7) Climate Action fund (CAF)proposal	AB – theme to co-ordinate CAF bid is for £800,000 supporting communities with partners. The deadline for submission is 28 th September. Wildlife Trust and Westcountry Rivers Trust are core partners with nurturing and support from CAG. 8 Community hubs – which could be increased with interest in setting up more to fill existing gaps in the community. AB acknowledged that MM had been very helpful during the bid phase.
8) Overall reflections on community engagement and how to co-ordinate it	KH – Connective actively – submitted a lottery application in Aug, will find out if it's successful 5 th Dec. working with most deprived and inactive communities in Devon 8 in the Torridge. RD co-ordinating groups who may lack practical support on insurance and legal documentation is essential – networking is very important – CAG support is vital. MW – Beaford over 10 years has changed how it engaged, the conclusion is that their prescription was 18 months ahead of the community. Biosphere – can see it's doing good things but there is a lag of 2 years – Bridge Chambers will take 2 years to complete and then the Biosphere will be in a more accessible place and awareness will be highlighted. Bridge Chambers will provide a good liaison point with Claire Ayres (Beaford) and the biosphere community engagement post, a central point for the next level of community engagement. TJ – there are real issues of deprivation in the Biosphere - statistics showing a much higher level of absence from work and school post covid. AB - UK UNESCO – shared outcomes fund – is a project area looking at data between departments and how to share and use it to make better decisions for the future. This could fund two full time members of staff for two years to look at these figures. CM – is there anyone talking to businesses about the decisions being made – less capacity for volunteers and the lack of youth engagement? NC – Braunton Countryside Centre (BCC) has been running the 'connect to nature' project targeting the hard-to-reach demographic. Live Well Braunton who with partners are also targeting these groups. Ethnic and diverse groups need to be reached out to as well. Partnership engages with schools and youth. Communities and leaders in local politics Encouraging different backgrounds and how to engage
9) BREAK	
10) Updates	
a) Nature Improvement Group	MM submitted report attached to the minutes. The group are still meeting twice a year. They have changed their name to the Nature Recovery Group MM & ER are splitting the role of Chairing the group in the interim, until a new Chair is found. NRP is past its halfway stage with Interim reports are being written at the moment for circulation. Wetlands and waterbodies has been shared by e-newsletter and on socials Coast will be circulated soon. Tim Jones has taken over co-ordinating the coast group from Martin Batt Pledge for Nature has ended but the legacy of the project will continue through the CAF bid. The updated local plan will enhance the support of Nature Recovery

	<p>NRG are going on a field trip to Ockerton Court to have a look at peatland restoration.</p> <p>Vote of thanks for Mike and Emma for their continued work with the group.</p>
b) Catchment Group	<p>ER – meetings are in July and November</p> <p>A facilitator Claire Honey a consultant from Plymouth Community and partnership group has been appointed. The group want to bring in more experts for example July – SW Lakes non-natives talk with EA agriculture team.</p> <p>Laurence submitted the wetlands and Waterbodies report for NRG.</p> <p>The next challenge is seeking additional funding for catchment scale projects with multi partner delivery, and multi-year funded projects. Claire H should be able to help with that.</p> <p>Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT) ‘in water’ west country all catchment partnership is looking at the citizen science and monitoring.</p> <p>Brett Grosvenor has left the EA and we look forward to his replacement joining the group.</p> <p>Horizon 20/20 funding for large scale projects is looking for large scale lottery bid on water quality for 2026/7 start. Want all funding streams on the table for a long-term slow burn project.</p> <p>RD - funding – is match funding required and where will it come from?</p> <p>Corporate support such as SWW, could provide match funding.</p>
c) Green Economy	<p>Nature Tourism, Biosphere Business Partners (report)</p> <p>SJ – Dark Skies event is half full at present pleased with uptake so far.</p> <p>The Peak Challenge Triathlon has raised over £3,000 to date a great contribution and awareness raiser for the Biosphere.</p> <p>Biosphere Business Partners (BBP) Leah Clarke our T level placement student has devised a program for the peer review.</p> <p>Green Economy Group Progress</p> <p>MS – now has 55 contributors a smaller more distilled group.</p> <p>Kate, Helen and Emma are working in collaboration, and we would encourage more as opportunities are being missed, sharing information on events and workshops would be beneficial to all.</p> <p>Natural Capital Market Place (NCM)</p> <p>NC - Updates on the market</p> <p>Re-engaged with the Landowners and farmers contacted I the initial round of workshops and talking to stakeholders.</p> <p>We have now got a technical programmer Aswin Aravind who is working the platform that the NCM sits on.</p> <p>MA – is there confidence in the principal?</p> <p>NC – interest in the domestic market</p> <p>Getting projects in place is the problem and scale is an issue.</p> <p>Trying to set up who we'll sell to, only working with companies with good credentials.</p> <p>The sector is looking to put procedures in place to show that projects are delivering and that connections are working in the local area.</p>
d) DRIP and collaboration potential in the Little Dart Catchment (SC/MM)	<p>Progress Report attached to Agenda</p> <p>MM – There are a number of projects in the Little Dart catchments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRIP – DCC/Biosphere • Northern Devon Natural Solutions (NDNS) – DWT • Taw Valley & Little Dart Facilitation Fund – Biosphere <p>So, lots going on. We have decided to draw together and had a meeting last week to look at optimising projects to reduce confusion for landowners.</p> <p>Exploring Exemplary Catchment Management (ECM), We ran a Theory of Change exercise to clarify the problems, to work out what the outcomes for the ECM would look like, what the gaps in catchment management there are and how to fill them.</p>
e) Forestry Group (Andy B)	<p>Devon Woods Report attached to Agenda (Nic Kirkham)</p>

f) Community group/ Plastic Free Consortium (Claire Moody)	<p>CM – Ocean Explorer project has now finished and PFND have been unsuccessful with 11 funding bids. It's a problem taking young people out of school for projects as schools struggle to find staff and transport.</p> <p>SCF grant for after school clubs.</p> <p>Eco-councils – energy for eco but not the time.</p> <p>Repair cafes – waiting for funding.</p> <p>Visitor campaign – over 200 businesses involved.</p> <p>Toy shed – was very popular over the tourist season.</p> <p>CAG might support – community engagement.</p> <p>ND Consortium – would look at priority projects.</p> <p>PFND will be rebranding to better represent their lobbying and strategic identity.</p> <p>World Biosphere Day 3rd November NNDC – Climate Festival events for community groups including Beaford Exhibition of Gideon Mendel – photographer “Drowning World” looking at areas which may be underwater by 2050.</p>
g) Climate Group	
h) SMART Biosphere	<p>Update on project Andy Bell</p> <p>At present a review is being made of the system, working with Siemens and Rothamsted on the calibration of the kit.</p> <p>There have been data loss issues and issues with contractors which are being addressed.</p>
i) CRITTER update (AB/SC) verbal report	<p>Progress continues the farms engaged in the catchments and the estuary basin. Chantal Brown will be doing some contract work with landowners during the Autumn.</p>
j) Marine Group	Already above
k) Research Group	<p>Potential of Horizon bid with other Biosphere Reserves.</p> <p>Biosphere Forest Group working with Finland and Italy with old growth stocks, a European partner has to lead Tropical Forests – Kenya and Tanzania, we could take the academic lead on this.</p>
11) AOB & DONM	<p>A vote of thanks from the Partnership to Dave Edgecombe who is retiring on 29th September after 40 years working in North Devon in various positions within the countryside services.</p> <p>A vote of thanks to Brett Grosvenor for all his work and input into the Biosphere projects over his time at the EA.</p> <p>Date of next meeting to be confirmed in 30th January 2024. At Taw View Lynton meeting rooms 1.30-4.00pm</p>

Acronyms used in minutes:

CRF – Community Renewal Fund
 UoE – University of Exeter
 DCC local Nature Reserves Strategy (LNR)
 DRIP – Devon Resilience Innovation Project
 WEZ - Woodland Enterprise zone
 DWT - Devon Wildlife Trust
 ELMS – Environmental Land Management Schemes
 IoD – Institute of Directors
 NDMAAS – North Devon Marine Awareness Accreditation Scheme
 CAF – Community Action Fund
 BBP – Biosphere Business Partners
 NRG – Nature Recovery Group
 GEG – Green Economy Group
 NDNS – Northern Devon Natural Solutions
 CAG – Community Action Group