

Draft Minutes from: Wales Grassland and Heathland Ecosystem Group (G&H ESG)

Meeting 4: 13th Oct 2009 – Ladywell House, Newtown.

Present:

Richard Evans WAG
Carrie Rimes CCW
Stuart Smith CCW
Charles Morgan PONT
Helen Buckingham NT
Juliet Hynes WBP
Dave Lamacraft RSPB
Jan Sherry CCW
Ivy Berkshire Flora locale

Apologies:

Sion Brackenbury Gower Commons and C&C of Swansea
Caroline Wilson SNP
Trevor Dines Plantlife
Julian Jones RWT & WTW

Item	Discussion	Action	Progress
1. Apologies	See above		
2. Minute from previous meeting,	Progress of actions entered on Minutes from meeting3. Outstanding actions below: A2 – Carried forward	1. TD advise all groups to	

updates on actions not covered below		add an extra column to record action progress until the groups have been set up on BARS.	
	A9 – HEAP project: DL obtained HEAP methodology. HEAP tried to plot sites for potential lowland heathland habitat in England. CCW did have similar project with Reading university but not sure what happened to it. Do we want to pursue the HEAP idea for Wales? Heathland is only considered functional when patch size is >30ha so could use the methodology to identify areas where patches could be expanded and linked to produce functional heathland. RE – worth waiting for Landcover map and connectivity indicator work from WAG which should be available in the spring	2. DL- circulate the HEAP information to the G&H group.	Done 15-10-09
	A10 – carried forward. Suggested that the template needs an extra column to record who is contributing to funding	3. TD follow up extra column on template to record who is funding an action	
	A17 – carried forward. Surveying and Monitoring action – condition of statutory sites?	4. TD ask Andrew Peterken for overview of the condition status of feature species on Lowland meadows for the next G&H meeting	
	A18 – carried forward. Vision for lowland grassland – need to look at long term planning for lowland grasslands, sub group proposed to investigate this (complete draft by June 2010) Members JJ, HB, CR, SS, IB. May also be useful to	5. JJ lead group, check with Barbara (upland group) how long it took to set up upland vision. Arrange 1 st	

	involve Miles King.	meeting	
	A21 – carried forward. The species actions are quite generic at the moment, could make them more specific by adding list of appropriate sites to the LBAP areas boxes, could also tighten up the timescales.	6. TD take these suggestions to SEG	
	A28 – carried forward	7. CM send most up to date uplands action plan template to NS	
	A29 – uplands group not covering upland dry acid grassland within action plan as not a BAP habitat, but it will get covered broadly within the upland work.		
	A32 – disaggregated revised lowland meadow targets	8. CR circulate disaggregated revised lowland meadow targets to LBAPs as soon as poss.	
	A39 – Species expert group actions; timetable for release of species targets has been agreed, see below		
	Make sure that appropriate groups are aware of and can contribute to G&H group.	9. All, suggest groups / individuals that should be included on our circulation list so that JH can contact and add them.	
3. Update from meeting of ESG Chairs	Discussion about resources – Diana Reynolds made clear that there are no more resources available, but 5% of resources from each WAG department have to be committed to biodiversity (this has had ministerial agreement).	10. JH ask Diana Reynolds to clarify exactly what 5% from WAG Depts. means?	Missunderstanding of what was said at the chairs meeting, clarification as follows – we are in difficult times and resources are dropping and will be dropping for some time to come. There are other ways of drawing on

			resources and WAG are trying to incorporate biodiversity into all departments, See the WAG NERC duty compliance case study on the WBP website click here . Not every department is buying in yet, but there was recently a commitment by cabinet that everything should be measured against sustainability and obviously biodiversity is intrinsically apart of this.
<p>Was also discussion about partner organisations committing to their staff spending time on the ESGs/SEG Although there is buy in at the top and on the ground there still seems to be an issue with middle management. Diana Reynolds s going to raise this point at her next meeting with the chief execs in Jan 2010.</p> <p>We should remember that people are on these groups to represent their organisations so make sure you report back to your relevant colleagues (3 bullet point summary of the most important points will do)</p>	<p>11. No representation from national parks or WTW at today's meeting so JH copy in WTW and Mike Howe to LBAP summary.</p> <p>12. JH ask Mike Howe (Pembs NP) whether he would like to attend the G&H group.</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Emailed 27/10/09</p>	
<p>Links with current research – each ESG is going to be assigned a member of the research community (probably a post doc).</p> <p>RE- circulated a request t the ESGs to keep him informed of research needs so that he can feed into the DEFRA 6 monthly research review meetings. The Grassland &Heathland ESG should add research needs as a standing</p>	<p>13. if anyone has any suggestions for relevant researchers that could sit on any group then send them to JH</p> <p>14. JH add research needs as standing item to the agenda</p>		

	<p>item to the agenda and then prioritise the suggestions before RE takes them to DEFRA. We need to produce water tight ideas, those with UK wide relevance will stand a better chance. Need to be specific to the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plans</p>	<p>15. CR send ecosystem services research proposal to RE</p>	
	<p>6-8k grants from the trial of the new CCW grant scheme (40k available in total) looking for each ESG to put forward one project. Money must be spent by end March 2010</p>	<p>16. JH circulate email to G&H group and those attending funding meeting.</p>	<p>Done – 14/10/09</p>
	<p>Timetable for action plans and targets –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing habitats, keep targets as set by the UK review in 2006 ▪ For new BAP habitats, targets should be set by 1st February 2010 ▪ Action plans for existing BAP habitats should be produced by 1st February 2010 ▪ New BAP habitats, urgent actions should be identified by 1st June 2010, then full action plan by end March 2011 	<p>17. JS circulate timetable for target and action plans</p>	<p>Done – 15/10/09</p>
	<p>CR reported that UK lowland farmland HAP meeting has taken place (attended by CR and Clare Burrows from Wales Farmland ESG). General feeling was that overall aims of the group weren't clear. Main idea is that they are there to bring targets into alignment. England and Wales are sticking with the 2006 HAP targets, Scotland are aligning them with ecosystem services. Next meeting is probably in Birmingham in New year. Would like to do information sharing particularly on new priority habitats, i.e. Calaminarian grasslands. Also asked what Wales is doing</p>	<p>18. SS pass info on calaminarian grassland target setting to CR to forward to Scotland contacts.</p>	

	with Annex 1 habitats and Annex 2 species (EU directives). General feeling is that the original UK groups should carry on. May be that we need to discuss and take to WBP at some point.		
4. Glastir	<p>DL - Entry level regional packages are being prepared. These are based broadly on the LBAP regions. Have until end of the year to identify species and habitats that are particularly important for each region and what options are relevant.</p> <p>Regions have already been scored for species, now need to do same thing for habitats.</p> <p>Probably going to be set up so that if you go for a regional package you get 100% of the points but if you did all those options are separates you'd only get e.g. 95% of the points. Wag appear to prefer to have farmers take up the packages so 100% of the points come from the package, you don't get any extra points for taking on any additional options.</p> <p>Need to ensure packages are tight enough to avoid damaging situations e.g. taking up arable package and ploughing up grasslands. Concerns raised by G&H group over lack of project officers as damage to habitats may occur without being noticed.</p>	<p>19. DL circulate scoring table for habitats.</p>	
	<p>Higher level scheme – been developing prescriptions and producing habitat maps for priority areas. CM going to try and get support for using our native breeds included.</p> <p>Need to think about specifying where to use cattle or sheep</p>	<p>20. RE will talk to Kevin Austin (WAG) about multi habitat parcels.</p> <p>21. DL collate list of key</p>	<p>JS sent e-mail on 19th Oct to all Chairs</p> <p>HB emailed request to Diana on 26/10/09</p>

<p>and provide evidence of why they should be used.</p> <p>The Rural Inspectorate for Wales (RIW) has suggested that there is a problem with multiple habitats an a single parcel. RE thinks this should not be a problem as you opt for the prescription for the most sensitive habitat in the parcel. We need to make it clear to RIW that they need to put a system in place to compliance monitor these multi habitat parcels.</p> <p>Concerns raised by DL over use of livestock units /ha rather than outcomes i.e. x sward height at x time of year. Group thought both were requires, prescription and illustrated outcome. Need coordinated response to Kevin Austin’s team to push that outcomes should be provided as well as prescriptions, need to provide evidence of why both are necessary.</p> <p>Could back up habitat outcomes will illustrative pictures at 4 times of year.</p> <p>Farms need to be able to pass the monitoring, will never get all outcomes on the list so need to agree a combination of outcomes that is acceptable to pass monitoring so that farm gets its payment.</p> <p>Need to make the point that if you really want to hit the targets you really need individual site management plans.</p> <p>Project officers (though lower in numbers) are supposed to be proactive, going out to farms within habitat map target areas. The project officers will need guidance for each</p>	<p>points raised about problems with higher tier and send to HB before Mon 19th Oct (include Wildlife Link in this discussion).</p> <p>22. HB will raise points with Diana Reynolds at meeting on Monday 19th Oct and follow up with email to DR requesting a meeting with Kevin Austin to go through the concerns raised about higher tier.</p> <p>23. JS email relevant ESG chairs to get agreement over issues before Mon 19th Oct. Also ask Clare Burrows to bring up the outcomes issues with Kevin Austin</p>	
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	<p>habitat. Ideally use habitat outcomes as a template then pick those appropriate to the individual site.</p> <p>What are the minimum outcomes and the ideal outcomes you'd like to see – can somewhere between this be acceptable?</p> <p>Key points raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual management plans in addition to general prescriptions ▪ Outcomes rather than just livestock units ▪ Clarification on how project officers will operate (will there be a list of experts that Pos can approach for advice) 		
	<p>CR and SS attended Environmental Stewardship seminar last week. Main message was that Entry Level scheme (ELS) had produced little for biodiversity (high uptake of easy options – was R&D review so evidence based) and that with the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) depended on the project officer and only really worked where special projects were attached. Success was measures as achievement of outcomes.</p>	<p>24. CR and SS through HB – send message from G&H group back to Kevin Austin that ELS has not achieved much for biodiversity, copy in Dai Harris (as he was also at the ES meeting), Diana Reynolds and relevant people from CCW.</p>	
<p>5. Grassland Funding Meeting</p>	<p>There was lots of interest shown, and a good turnout at the grassland funding meeting. Saving our Magnificent Meadows (SMM) project is looking at securing a long term funding steam for lowland grassland and have been gathering information on the issues and needs around grassland projects. The info gathered at the funding meeting</p>	<p>25. JH – add to policy template a) how do we get grassland funding needs across to the funding bodies. b) the need for continuation of</p>	

<p>will input into the SMM framework document which will be used to inform funders (available very soon). SMM need to recruit to replace Donna Radley for the last 18 months of the project so currently planning to try and influence the main funders rather than going for LIFE+ bid. However, Donna's replacement will help facilitate a life bid if that is decided to be the way people want to go.</p> <p>The SMM framework document will be a UK document, should we produce a summary of the welsh issues that we could all sign up to? It was suggested that we should promote examples of best practice. WBP website has updated version of the local successes document, will be on website soon, could add to these (form for adding project http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/what_can_the_wbp_offer_you-19.aspx. Also possibility of adding to the Flora Locale Wild Meadows Website http://www.floralocale.org/content.asp?did=24064.</p> <p>Grassland and heathland Vision for Wales – SMM framework document and Wild Meadow's Meadows Manifesto could provide a basis for the vision (Natural England have produced a wetland vision, may also take on meadows as a key campaign next year).</p> <p>All presentations and notes will be made available on the WBP website http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/new_page-143.aspx</p>	<p>funding where projects cannot produce any other continuation strategy.</p>	
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<p>6. WWGAS update</p>	<p>Carol Greenstock (National Trust funding officer) thought WWGAS was suitable to put in a bid to LIFE+ Nature to cover whole of west Wales, so NT European funding officer coming over to discuss potential. Meeting on 13th Jan to get all data sets together to identify suit of sites covering Annex 1 habitats and Annex 2 Species for the LIFE+ bid, then meeting NT European funding Officer on 10th Feb.</p> <p>Tracy Lovering (CCW) has identified 25 Marsh Fritillary sites in West Wales which have potential for a WREN funding bid. Hoping to involve Butterfly Conservation (could include BC project officer time in the bid). If included NT sites as demonstration sites within the bid then NT might lead on the project.</p> <p>Should monitor the Marsh Frit. metapopulation as well as sites the project will work on.</p>	<p>26. JS get Tracey to contact farmers to get permission letters in place.</p> <p>27. CM talk to Russel Hobson at SEG meeting</p> <p>28. CM send Anglesey table to SS and JS</p> <p>29. DL send GIS bird data to JS</p> <p>30. TD send GIS plant data to JS</p> <p>31. CM inform Pemb, Carm and Ceredigion LBAPs of current situation with WWGAS</p>	<p>Done</p> <p>Done</p> <p>Done</p>
<p>7. Heathland Action Plan</p>	<p>Action leads have to be a person from the G&H group (lead makes sure the relevant people are aware of the action). Need to add deadlines</p> <p>Milestones – Natural England doing some work on grasslands so CCW put in bid to include some field sites from Wales.</p> <p>Should use ESGs as a mechanism to provide training.</p> <p>JS will update the actions in light of the species actions and targets being released by SEG next week, then she will circulate for comment any additions from other organisations.</p>	<p>32. JS circulate updated Heathland action plan</p> <p>33. All, add any further actions to updated plan.</p> <p>34. JS add target number column back into action template so that can mark which target an action contributes to</p>	

<p>8. Wild Meadows Project Update</p>	<p>Successes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manifesto for meadows initiated a meeting with Mike Dunn (WAG) about Axis 2 ▪ Free events for landowners ▪ Meadow peoples network; sharing info and experiences ▪ 84 site visits so far ▪ Local provenance seed supply, important partnerships in place ▪ Technical publications <p>Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ would be useful to have demonstration sites to illustrate different levels of management. ▪ plenty of scope for more site visits if the manpower was available ▪ what should happen to the project info and data when/if it ends ▪ how do you protect quality individual fields (suggested inform LRCs and LBAP officer and/or Wildlife Trust planning officer) ▪ Wales grassland conference to share info and experience (suggested IB talks to nature) ▪ Wild meadows website underused, are case studies on there, what will happen to it when project finishes <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People who don't want to deal with bureaucracy ▪ People want an informal link to information ▪ Need support (hand holding in some cases) 	<p>35. IB contact Marie Madigan at Natur about grassland conference</p> <p>36. All, what else should be on the Wild Meadows website, how can it be used to full potential, let IB know any ideas</p> <p>37. IB contact Donna Radley to see if there are any related projects Wild Meadows could join up with for a funding bid.</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuity of officer they're working with so build up trust ▪ Interesting sites that are not recorded on phase I ▪ Should we pay? Some of these people are quite well off but won't do anything unless the money is there to motivate them ▪ Age, often retired people buying small parcels of land, what happened to the land when they go. <p>The project is due to end in 6 months. – CR suggested this fits the scope of learning and education work that HLF said they would be funding this year. Should also look into interim funding as HLF might take a while.</p> <p>Would a partnership with the Wildlife Trust Work as they are doing similar work?</p>		
9. CCW Monitoring Report	Not yet available, SS will update with any progress	38. SS update group if the monitoring report is made available	
10. AOB	Future of PONT – funding ends in July, at CCW meeting everyone reinforced how important PONT. However in the current economic climate CCW may find it difficult to continue the same level of funding therefore if partner organisations could contribute something small to funding PONT to help match fund it would help the CCW position. Pont has also employed a contractor to look at future funding options.	39. All, please send any letters of support for PONT to CR	Done, 13 letters received, Helen forwarded them to Diana Reynolds on 23/10/09
11. Date of next	Next meeting 2 nd March 2010, possibly Shrewsbury	40. JH find location for next meeting	

meeting	Following meeting 24 th June		