

WALES BIODIVERSITY GROUP: 18 OCTOBER 1996 AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES, CARDIFF

MINUTES OF MEETING 1

Those present:

Mr R D Macey Chairman)	Mr M Thomas
Mr I Bonner	Mr J Cowie
Mr D Archer	Dr M Smith
Dr M Wilson	Dr J Menon
Mr P Coates	Mr R Jarvis
M\$ G Mackley	Dr E Andrews
Mr S Hewitt	Mr J Salmon
Ms R Jenkins	Mr R Farmer
Mr E Hollister	Dr G Oliver
Prof C Stirton	

WBG Secretariat

Mrs J Annand
Mrs L Dobbins

Apologies were received from Prof Claridge (represented by Dr Wilson), Mr R Cross (represented by Dr Andrews), Mr T Prater (represented by Mr Farmer), Mr I Huws (represented by Mr Archer), Mr P Dymond and Mr B Nelson.

ITEM 1: Welcome and introductions

1. Mr Macey welcomed members to the first meeting of the Wales Biodiversity Group. Particular th~nks were given to the National Museum for hosting the first meeting. Pen pictures of members and their organisations would be circulated as soon as all had been received.

ACTION: WBG Secretariat to issue pen pictures.

1.2 Mr Macey underlined the strategic nature of the group. He said that the business of the day had been structured into two parts. The first set of papers were by way of background : the development of policy on biodiversity leading to the establishment of the UK Biodiversity and Country groups (WBG2), and a position statement from CCW on their role, and progress on the species and habitat action plans for Wales (WBG3). The second set of papers were concerned with the structures needed to take biodiversity forward in Wales (WBG4&5), and the proposed UK lead partners on(Biodiversity Action Plans)(BAPS) (WBG6).

ITEM 2: WBG 2 - Presentation by UKBG Secretariat

2.1 Mr Donald described the background to the current focus on biodiversity, from the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to the creation of the various UK groups to take forward BAPs, including the establishment of the country focus of which WBG was one.

ACTION: the Secretariat agreed to distribute handouts by Mr Donald on receipt (now attached).

ITEM 3: WBG 3 - Presentation by the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

3.1 Dr Smith introduced the CCW paper. He highlighted the fact that considerable progress had already been made both by CCW and other organisations in implementing conservation action for many of the species and habitats for which plans have been written. Dr Smith also drew WBG's attention to Annex C of the paper which grouped many of the species according to the habitats in which they occur. He said that some form of classification of this kind was needed given the scale of the task. Ensuing discussion covered:

- The **CCW estimates of the costs** of taking forward the BAPs (£1.43m species and £5.6m for habitats). Dr Smith said that the castings were rough but included estimates of land purchase and management agreements.
- The **difficulties of monitoring** and the need for a focused and balanced approach; some species for example are naturally rare and it was not the intention to increase their numbers. There was concern about the degree of flexibility in the programme in order to respond for example to environmental disasters, and to climate change. Mr Donald said that the UK group had it in mind to discuss the latter topic.
- The **availability of resources**. Mr Smith said that whilst biodiversity was a key priority for CCW, resources were cash limited. Mr Macey added that additional funds had been made available in the last PES round in recognition inter alia of CCW's biodiversity responsibilities, but other statutory agencies such as the Environment Agency and WOAD also had a part to play and would need to bear their share of the costs.

ITEM 4: WBG 4 - Role and main tasks of the Wales Biodiversity Group

4.1 Mrs Annand introducing the paper said that the Annex was the UK Group's proposals on the responsibilities of the country focus groups. Whilst it was open to WBG to consider any specific needs for Wales, it needed to approach this in the context that it was part of a suite of groups headed by the UK group and could not therefore diverge too far from the key role envisaged by the latter.

4.2 Members agreed with the role and main tasks set out in WBG 4 Annex 1. It was agreed that if necessary this could be revised as the work of the Group developed.

4.3 The Group considered the adequacy of databases. Dr Smith said that they were variable, but that one of the functions of the action plans was to establish where information was inadequate. Mr Donald added that the UK Group had recognised the problem and had established the Information Group to coordinate the development of the UK Biodiversity Database. Professor Stirton asked about the relationship between this database and the proposed IUCN system to which the UK Government had signed up that week at the Conservation Congress in Quebec.

ACTION: Secretariat to establish the position.

ITEM 5: WBG 5 - Strategic responsibilities

5.1 Mr Macey introduced the paper, which sought views on whether any supporting structure for WBG should mirror that at the UK level, led by coordinators who would also sit on the UK groups. Dr Smith and Mr Macey were the representatives on the UK group.

5.2 The strategic approach set out in WBG 5 was agreed. It was also agreed that there should be 4 coordinators. Mr Bonner would lead on Action Plans; Dr Smith on Targets, Dr Oliver on Information and Mr Jarvis and Mr Archer on Local Issues. These coordinators would also be the WBG representatives on the relevant UK Groups.

5.3 It was also agreed that other members would approach the coordinators if they had an interest in joining in any sub, fora on the 4 issues. Consideration would also be given to involving the new Environment Education Council for Wales.

ITEM 6: WBG 6 - UK Lead Partners

6.1 Mr Macey introduced this paper, which set out the proposed roles for champions, contact points and lead partners. WBG were also asked to consider the suggested lead partners for the species and habitats in Wales.

6.2 Concern was expressed about the seemingly complicated lines of communication and reporting. Mr Donald confirmed that only one report would be required. In order to clarify matters, Mr Macey agreed the secretariat would consider whether a flow chart of

responsibilities and deliverables could be prepared.

ACTION: Secretariat to consider a flow chart.

6.3 In discussing the role of champions, Mr Macey asked for any thoughts about people/organisations in Wales to be forwarded to the secretariat. Consideration was also given to the representation of industry on WBG. Mr Macey said that it had proved difficult so far to identify anyone relevant/ interested, and Mrs Annand said that it had been intended to forge links through bilaterals.

6.4 Several suggestions were made about likely interested candidates - Celtic Energy, British Steel and BLC.

Medicinal leach: WBG thought that the RSPB was an odd choice

Euphrasia cambrica: RBGE not CCW should be the lead

Natterjack toad: EN should be added

Allis & Twaite shad: The EA should be added

6.5 On **lead partners**, these were broadly agreed by the group subject to:

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

7.1 It was agreed that the next meeting would be on 17 January 1997 at 1030am in mid Wales. Thereafter the group would meet about 3 times a year (subject to review) at venues around Wales and would include visits to relevant ventures in their programme.

WBG Secretariat - 10/96