

**PARTNERIAETH BIOAMRYWIAETH CYMRU
WALES BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

**CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE WALES BIODIVERSITY
PARTNERSHIP HELD AT THE ARMY TRAINING ESTATE, CASTLEMARTIN,
PEMBROKE SHIRE ON 4 MARCH 2003**

Present:

June Milligan (Chair WBG)	Welsh Assembly Government Countryside Division Welsh
Trish Fretten	Assembly Government Countryside Division Welsh
Steve Lucas	Assembly Government Countryside Division Welsh
Richard Evans	Assembly Government Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department, Aberystwyth
Patrick Cowdy	Welsh Assembly Government Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department, Aberystwyth
Joanna Robertson	Wales Biodiversity Partnership/CCW
Julia Korn	Wales Biodiversity Partnership LBAP Facilitator Wales
Nigel Ajax-Lewis	Wildlife & Countryside Link
Tony Prater	Wales Wildlife & Countryside Link
David Keast (Chair LIAG)	Welsh Local Government Association
David Bullock	National Trust
Dr Mike Wilson	National Museums and Galleries of Wales
Dr David Parker	Countryside Council for Wales Countryside
Tim Blackstock	Council for Wales Pembrokeshire Coast National
Jane Hodges	Park Environment Agency
Teg Jones	MoD
Clive Thomas	

Attending for the Group Discussion, by invitation:

David Worrall	Countryside Council for Wales, West Area
Matt Sutton	Countryside Council for Wales, West Area
Bob Haycock	Countryside Council for Wales, West Area
Wendy Payne	Planed
Bethan Cox	Pembs LBAP Partnership
Andrew Tuddenham	National Trust, Pembs Heathland Project
Derek Moore	Wildlife Trust South and West Wales
Jerry Langford	Woodland Trust

Apologies:

Ruth Jenkins	Forestry Commission Wales Snowdonia
David Archer	National Park Authority
Lindsay Roberts	Welsh Assembly Government Planning Division
Philip Coates	S Wales Sea Fisheries Committee
Dr Quentin Kay	National Botanic Garden of Wales
Brian Nelson	Welsh Water
Nick J Somerfield	FUW
Emyr Hughes	NFU Cymru

Three members had not responded to a request to confirm attendance.

1. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming members and guests and introducing Trish Fretten, the new Head of Nature Conservation in the Countryside Division. This meeting followed the pattern now adopted by the Partnership - with breakout discussion groups and a plenary session to identify actions to take forward.

2. **Large Scale Habitat Restoration Projects in Wales: Reaching our Habitat Action Plan Targets**

The Chair welcomed the opportunity to address this issue, which had been considered in less depth by the Partnership on previous occasions. She explained that this discussion was timely from the Welsh Assembly Government's viewpoint: the EPT Committee had just concluded its review of local biodiversity action; and the process of European designation of individual sites was almost complete. There was an opportunity now to look at other types and scales of biodiversity intervention.

David Parker and Tim Blackstock from CCW were invited to introduce the topic: David emphasised the limitations of designated sites programmes for achieving biodiversity conservation targets and viability problems for habitats and species arising from fragmentation and degradation. Tim identified HAP targets for habitat restoration and expansion and the long-term commitment required by everyone to deliver them.

Members and guests broke into three discussion groups, aided by facilitators to consider:

- i. Existing projects/ lessons learned.
- ii. Proposed schemes/ mechanisms
- iii. Community benefits of habitat restoration projects

The findings and recommendations from the Groups are listed in Annex 1.

ACTION: June Milligan to Chair a Task/Finish Group comprising Dave Bullock, Derek Moore, Tony Prater and David Parker to identify and agree actions to be taken forward by WBP.

3. **Wales Biodiversity Partnership's Forward Programme and Budget**

Members approved the projects and budget allocations, noting the scope for further commitment. Unanimous support was given for continuing the LBAP Facilitator post for a further three years, after March 2004. The Chair asked CCW to take action to secure this post.

ACTION: David Parker to confirm that the action has been taken to secure the LBAP Facilitator post.

There is provision in the budget to support the costs of Partnership members' attendance at the UK Biodiversity Partnership conference in Scotland.

ACTION: Secretariat to update Programme and Budget to reflect decisions and circulate with papers for July WBP meeting. Allocation of the £9k currently un allocated would be an agenda item for that meeting.

4. REPORTS

i. Local Issues Advisory Group

The report is reproduced at *Annex 2*. David Keast drew attention to a number of challenging issues. National bodies with limited staff struggle to deliver actions identified in local plans but many are developing their own solutions. Local Plans are the product and responsibility of a partnership, with Unitary Authorities playing a vital catalytic role recognised by the Assembly's EPT committee; financial independence is being explored by one LBAP Group in South Wales. These issues will be debated at the Annual LIAG Practitioners' Seminar (July 17/18 in Swansea). An event aimed at gaining increased support for the LBAP process from Chief Officers of Unitary Authorities and national organisations is planned.

ACTION: Julia to bring proposals to July WBP including links to biodiversity awards

Julia circulated copies of the interim 'Community Strategy Advisory note' attractively designed by Gaynor Ainscough, and intended to help those involved in the LBAP process play an effective role in the CS process.

ii. Update on UK matters:

Steve Lucas reported that the first UK Partnership meeting is scheduled for 21/22 May 2003 at Battleby near Perth in Scotland; invitations will be issued by DEFRA to all Country Group members.

ACTION: Members seeking support to contact the Secretariat for guidance once their attendance costs are known.

Meetings of the two UK Partnership Support Groups are imminent. The Research Group, convened and chaired by DEFRA will meet in London on 6 March; Tim Blackstock will be attending for CCW and was asked to represent WBP. JNCC is convening an Information and Actions Group.

ACTION: Steve Lucas to contact UK BAP Policy Unit re dates and invitation for WBP representation.

Joanna Robertson outlined progress with the 2002 BAP reporting round.

This is a modest reporting round, with limited analysis. It trialled a web-based reporting system and brought in LBAPs for the first time. All the data collected will be available to enquirers. The report will be made available at the UK Partnership meeting in May and will reinforce the messages that emerged from the MBR. Key chapters will cover Lead Partners and LBAP relationships, aspects of Sustainable Development, issues affecting progress with plans and constraints to actions.

Biological information for the priority habitats and species will indicate status, trends and progress with targets and can be compared with data collected in 1999. It will be presented for marine, terrestrial and freshwater species and habitat groups. The next full reporting round is scheduled for 2005.

ACTION: Joanna to continue to represent the Partnership at reporting meetings and request further analysis of whether biodiversity was reflected in school curricula.

iii. Assembly matters

Trish Fretten reported on the JNCC's presentation and favourable reception at the Assembly's EPT Committee on 26 February.

The EPT's report from its review of Local Biodiversity Action had been presented at Plenary by the Minister and debated; widespread support was given to the recommendations; copies of the report and record were tabled and can be viewed at: [www.wales.gov.uk/servlet/ChamberSession?area code=380313ACOO 046817000](http://www.wales.gov.uk/servlet/ChamberSession?area%20code=380313ACOO046817000)

The Welsh Assembly Govt's publication on S74 Crow Act 2000 was at the final editing stage.

ACTION: CCW to report on progress with the production of action plans for the 12 additional species at the July WBP meeting.

Cymru Byw, a consultation document on strengthening the framework for biodiversity conservation is also at the final draft stage and is scheduled for release in early summer.

The Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on a draft Trunk Road Estate Biodiversity Action Plan has been issued. This initiative was commended by the Partnership; the consultation document can be found at www.wales.gov.uk/subi-transport/content/consultation/bio-action-plan-e.pdf

iv. Awareness: Web site

Steve Lucas reported that a static web site is being set up for the Partnership on the ukbap.org.uk site. There will be two elements: a static web site for publishing information and, at some time later, JNCC will develop a mechanism to allow interrogation of relevant JNCC datasets arising from reporting rounds. After a development phase the 'prototype' will be moved/ go live under a separate domain name. The CCW's Habitat Guidance document and the Voluntary Sector Species Audit will be completed imminently; both are welcomed and the Partnership wishes to see them accessible through the Web.

Awareness: Support post

Joanna confirmed that recruitment was approved by CCW on 3 March, that the job description would be circulated to Members and that Brian Nelson would be invited to assist with selection, (see *Annex 3*).

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate job description for Awareness post.

Awareness: Natur Cymru

David Parker, as Chair of the project board said that the magazine, now in its sixth issue was an established voice for the environment in Wales and a WBG success story in itself. He paid tribute to the Editor and Assistant Editor and supporting partners. The move to 4 issues a year and a new subscription offer is aimed at encouraging an increase in subscribers from 1500 to 2500, which will help the move towards less reliance on partnership support. Promotion at shows and events is planned for summer 2003.

v. Local Records Centres

The Chair drew attention to the funding which the Assembly had made available through CCW this year to fund the development and establishment phases of LRCs across Wales, and thanked David Parker, Ruth Jenkins, Nigel Ajax Lewis and David Keast for

their efforts.

ACTION: CCW to monitor progress and report back to WBP.

5. Minutes and Action Points from WBG19 November 2002

The minutes were confirmed.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate as *confirmed minutes*.

Patrick Cowdy was invited to report how the actions identified in the Linking Agriculture and Biodiversity workshops were being taken forward (Minute Item 2 recommendations *a* to *m*). Recommendations *a* to *d* inclusive had resulted in contact with LANTRA and EL Wa. LANTRA is receptive to suggestions and is developing an on-line support package for consultants and other advisors. EL Wa is conducting a major review and demonstration farms seem to offer opportunities for promoting messages about biodiversity.

It is clear that much more awareness of the implications for biodiversity of business and developmental advice is required and much more can be done to improve delivery through Farming Connect. The environmental component of Farming Connect awaits confirmation of funding. CCW reported that they were already addressing the simplification of land management prescriptions.

ACTION: Countryside and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Divisions to continue to identify ways of delivering desired outcomes. Patrick to work with LANTRA on environmental training for business consultants. Patrick to work with Brian Pawson of CCW over knowledge transfer to Farming Connect.

6. Arrangements for WBP02 and 03

The next Partnership meeting will be held on 8 July in Mid or North Wales. The theme will be Business and Biodiversity and Brian Nelson had previously offered to help identify an appropriate venue and invitees.

ACTION: Secretariat to consult Brian Nelson as to venue and invitees for next meeting. The date for WBP03 was confirmed as 11 November at a mid Wales venue.

Joanna reported on a Business and Biodiversity 'solution shop' staged at the Wales Environmental Conference held in Cardiff on 27 February. Many helpful messages had emerged. Earlier that week Julia and Joanna had met with Alan Tillotson of Arena Network. He and Brian Nelson would be asked to assist with the workshops at WBP02.

7. Other Business

- 7.1 Dave Bullock announced that the National Trust's newly appointed nature conservation advisor for Wales, Helen Buckingham will replace him on the Partnership.

7.2 After the meeting Bob Haycock of CCW and Clive Thomas of MoD described the biodiversity of the Army Training Estate at Castlemartin and benefits of the Integrated Management Action Plan. Unfortunately, few members were able to take up the invitation to view the site. Thanks were extended to all involved in the arrangements for the day.