

**Minutes of the Urban Ecosystem Group meeting
29 April 2015
By video conference between NRW Maes y Ffynnon and
Abergavenny Offices**

Attendees

Bangor

Steve Chambers (SC), Pete Frost (PF)(chair), Emily Meilleur (EM), Dave Thorpe (DT)

Abergavenny

Barbara Anglezarke (BA)(guest), Clare Dinham (CD), Sorrel Jones (SJ)

Apologies

Amanda Davies, Dafydd Fryer, Liz Howe, Nigel Ajax Lewis, Jan Sherry (JS).

Item	Title	Activity
1	Introductions and Welcome	EM was welcomed back to the group on return from her sabbatical and thanks were recorded to Amanda Davies for her enthusiastic contribution to the group in place of EM.
2	Apologies & submissions for AOB	No other business was raised.
3	Minutes of last meeting	The minutes of the previous meeting were noted.
4	Workplan	<p>The long-term work plan was reviewed in the light of expected budgets and resources. The updated work plan will be circulated Action 1. PF to update and circulate.</p> <p>NB these minutes report on matters discussed and actions required. Alterations to the work plan are not noted in these minutes, but have been made directly to the work plan.</p> <p><i>Priority sites map</i> It was agreed that this should be distributed in both GIS file format, and as files readable by non-GIS users as local authority cuts in particular were reducing access to GIS.</p> <p>It was noted that thanks to the unique nature of OMHoPDL the priority sites map would never be finished and would require constant updating as sites were destroyed and created.</p> <p>SJ noted that she had GIS expertise and might be able to help with creating maps for local authority/LBAP areas. Action 2. SJ to liaise with JS to discuss any assistance required.</p> <p>It was noted that whilst there was a well-developed site survey methodology, some coal spoil sites might not qualify as high-quality OMHoPDL and might require to be designated for statutory protection for other attributes such as threatened species.</p> <p><i>Communications</i> PF reported that no funds had been allocated for leaflet production so no progress had been made on this project. It was noted that Buglife have extensive information on OMHoPDL on their website, and although it is not Wales-specific it could serve the purpose the leaflet was designed for. EM noted that Cyngor Gwynedd Council might be able to offer translation into Welsh. Action 3. All to visit the Buglife website, review the information on OMHoPDL and report to PF by the end of May if they believe this is NOT suitable to use in place of</p>

		<p>the proposed leaflet. PF will collate responses and if they are favourable the group will recommend the Buglife information in place of the proposed leaflet.</p> <p>PF reported that absence of funds resulted in no progress on the guide to managing OMHoPDL. It was noted that Buglife have a guide to managing OMHoPDL which is in both paper and .pdf format, but is not up to date. It was agreed to see if this could be used as the basis for a guide to managing OMHoPDL which would be funded through sponsorship.</p> <p>Action 4. SJ and CD to investigate attracting sponsorship from ABP.</p> <p>Action 5. All to report back at the next meeting on potential sponsors.</p> <p>It was noted that many Wildlife Trusts had developed a wildlife-gardening advisory capacity and it was agreed to amend the work plan to reflect that.</p> <p><i>Research</i></p> <p>PF reported that NRW had reviewed the EcoServGIS toolkit and concluded that it was unsuitable for the purposes proposed by this group. Progress had therefore halted on this project due to insufficient funds to develop a toolbox from scratch. NRW is developing its approach to Natural Resource Management (NRM) and would benefit from a toolbox such as the one we propose.</p> <p>Action 6. PF To discuss with NRW's NRM leaders how NRW might develop such a toolbox.</p> <p><i>Policy and Legislation</i></p> <p>It was noted that the Institute of Welsh Affairs might be interested in running a seminar or meeting on legislative and policy change, but that any recommendations arising from such an event would not be under this group's control.</p> <p><i>Survey and Monitoring</i></p> <p>Given the lack of funds it was noted that NRW would not be able to undertake trial surveys, nor to fund them. However, it was noted that each LBAP group might be interested, and have members with time and expertise to survey one OMHoPDL site each over the coming year. It was agreed to ask all LBAP groups to attempt this, and for NRW to collate the results.</p> <p>Buglife noted that they were seeking core funding under new arrangements from the Welsh Government and could write into their bid funding for training in the OMHoPDL survey methodology. This would not cover all the costs of training but the group noted that people would be prepared to pay reasonable fees to attend such a course.</p> <p>Action 7. PF to discuss with CD</p> <p>Action 8. LH to report back on progress on planning a surveillance strategy.</p> <p>Action 9. All to review the revised work plan, comment on it and to come prepared to sign it off at the summer meeting of this group.</p>
5	Mapping OMHoPDL (standing item)	<p>The group noted that PF had produced a draft of a standard presentation which could be customised for use in a variety of circumstances.</p> <p>Action 10. All to check their e-mail and respond to PF with any comments and responses to questions posed about the presentation by the end of May. PF to issue the final presentation by the end of June.</p> <p>Actions 4, 5, and 6 from the last meeting were carried forward, and are reproduced here for reference.</p> <p><i>Following the last meeting JS reported that she had received no new information on digital data from local government ecologists (previous Action 4). Cofnod had reported they had a data set of local authority wildlife sites, but these had no information on habitat types represented on the sites. Action 4: JS to follow up and find out if habitat data had been added.</i></p>

		<p>DT reported that the Environment Agency had had GIS data on metal mines, derelict sites and contaminated land. Action 5: DT to attempt to obtain the relevant data.</p> <p>It was Agreed to issue an all Wales definitive map of OMHoPDL and Priority Sites based on the data generated by the DEFRA research project conducted by exegeis. Action 6: JS to combine any new information from local authorities with the DEFRA data into one GIS layer and highlight sites which were on the initial list of key sites compiled early in the life of this group. PF to obtain an up to date list of local authority contacts from WBP and to write to inform them of the priority sites map and how it may be obtained. PF to arrange for the data to be placed in NRW's data download facility.</p> <p>Action 7 from the last meeting was recorded as complete.</p>
6	Research needs and evidence gaps (standing item)	<p>PF reported that he had drafted entries for the evidence gaps register on species associated with human-created habitats, and on allotment provision and pollinators (see Action 10 of the previous minutes).</p> <p>Action 11. PF to circulate the entries and All to comment by the end of May.</p> <p>Action 12. EM and SC to discuss a possible evidence gaps project on mapping OMHoPDL and to report back at the next meeting.</p>
7	Policies (standing item)	<p>There were no reports of policies or forthcoming legislation which this group needed to influence. (Action 13 from the last meeting)</p> <p>Under action 11 from the last meeting DT reported that he had been replaced on the Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) group and that the new legislation had been passed in January 2015.</p> <p>Action 13. DT to provide a very short briefing on the Regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm</p> <p>PF reported that he had been in contact with the NRW officers responsible for NRM but that there was nothing substantive to report to the group since the last meeting (Action 12 from the previous meeting).</p> <p>NRW is running 3 NRM trials with funding from the Welsh Government in the Dyfi catchment, the Tawe catchment including Swansea, and in the Rhondda valley above Pontypridd.</p>
8	Check actions from last meeting	<p>Actions 1,2 and 3 were discussed under item 4 of this agenda). Actions 4,5 and 6 were noted under item 5. Action 7 was noted as completed. PF had sent details of the NRW NRM pilot project in the Rhondda to SJ by e-mail, discharging action 8. PF had circulated details of the Resilient Ecosystem Fund projects by e-mail prior to this meeting, discharging action 9. Action 10 was dealt with under agenda item 6. Actions 11, 12 and 13 were dealt with under agenda item 7. Action 14 was dealt with under agenda item 9. Action 15 was completed. Action 16 was discharged and JS had reported back to PF on the autumn Ecosystem Group chairs meeting.</p>
9	Review membership (standing item)	<p>At the last meeting of the Wales Biodiversity Partnership ecosystem group chairs it was suggested that all ecosystem groups increase their representation from the academic sector. The group noted Lorraine Frater's welcome participation in this group as a representative of the sector, both in person and by correspondence. The group agreed to seek a further academic representative, seeking in particular someone who is an active networker as well as having an academic interest in urban ecology or related discipline.</p> <p>Action 14. SJ to speak to the Urban Pollinators Group from Bristol to find out if they have colleagues who may be suitable invitees to this group.</p> <p>Action 15. PF to approach Kate Cameron at NRW to find out if she has any contacts.</p>
10	AOB	No other business was brought forward.
11	Confirm actions from this meeting	This item was not considered. Members are requested to check these minutes and report any problems or omissions by return.

12	Venue and Date of next meeting	<p>The group agreed to incorporate a site visit into its next meeting. SJ agreed to investigate a site visit at the ABP site in Newport. The visit will be written up as a brief case study. The date of the meeting will be fixed in conjunction with ABP, if they are agreeable, and will be in early July, or in September. A meeting room within walking distance of the site will be important in order to reduce both complexity and travelling time, and allow members to travel to and from the meeting by public transport on the same day.</p> <p>Action 16. SJ to approach ABP and to report back to PF as soon as possible and ideally by the end of May.</p>
13	Finish	<p>The meeting closed at 13:05 and the chair thanked all present for their participation.</p>