

UK Man and Biosphere Committee 19 Feb 2004

Ergon House, London SW1

Minutes

Present:	Andy Swash	Defra (chair)	Martin Price	UHI
	Andy Bell	Devon CC	Tim Hill	EN
	Rachel Hellings	SNH	Richard Butler	IoB
	Annie Smith	WCL	Moira Anderson	Defra

Apologies:	Richard Lloyd	CA	Ian Melville	SE
	John Box	Urban Forum	Pete Frost	CCW
	Mark Collins	WCMC	Nigel de Winser	RGS
	Ruth Cooper	RS		

1.0 Introductions

1.1 Andy Swash, Ecological Adviser to Defra's European Wildlife Division, introduced himself as the new chair of the UK MAB committee following Hilary Neal's move to a new post. Andy can be contacted on andy.swash@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Annie Smith was attending on behalf of Wildlife and Countryside Link.

2.0 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting and the Terms of Reference were agreed. Action 2.3 on clarifying the election procedure to the ICC had not been completed and would be followed up by MA.

Action: MA to follow up ICC election procedure

2.2 It was suggested that international links could be made through the British Council's programme, if the committee's proposals fitted with those of the BC. An approach should be made to the BC to explore opportunities offered by their programme.

Action: MA to contact British Council

2.3 It was agreed that the MAB programme had clear links with Education for Sustainable Development but it was noted that more UK BRs would need to meet the Seville criteria before the committee approached the cross departmental working group on ESD with regard to using BRs as a tool for raising awareness. It was agreed that a working group should be established including RH and AB. Dyfi BR would also be approached. The group should make links with the UK UNESCO group on education and also approach DCMS and the UK World Heritage Site committee on building education links

Action: AB and RH to establish an education working group

2.4 It was reported that Simon Chambers, who had represented UK UNESCO on the committee, had moved on and had not been replaced.

Action: MA to clarify the current status of UK MAB with UNESCO

2.5 Other actions had been completed or would be addressed under items on the agenda.

3.0 UK Biosphere Reserve Annual Report

3.1 A draft of the first annual report was circulated. The BR reports set out a summary of activity on reserves over the past year and any proposals, opportunities or constraints in extending the designations to meet the Seville criteria. It was suggested that the Advisory Committee on BRs should be approached in advance of the next review about the possible Galloway Hills BR. TH identified funding for work associated with developing the BRs in England as a constraint, but it was noted that other sources of funding such as Leader Plus may be available for a project officer.

3.2 It was agreed that AS and TH would draft a letter to the Secretary of State seeking views on how she wants to see BRs develop in the UK. This letter would highlight the valuable international links afforded by the designation and the links with other initiatives such as the Ecosystem Approach and Education for Sustainable Development. The letter should be accompanied by the forthcoming publicity brochure.

Action: AS to draft letter in consultation with TH

3.3 AB proposed that an invitation to visit the Branton Burrows BR should be sent to the Secretary of State or the Minister at the same time as the letter.

Action: AB to consider plans for a ministerial visit

4.0 Periodic Review

4.1 It was noted that the next periodic review was due in 2007 and agreed that funding should be sought to enable it to go ahead.

5.0 Developments at Branton Burrows

5.1 AB introduced the paper setting out developments at Branton Burrows since the re-designation in October 2003 and seeking the committee's views on proposals for a management structure. The management model should fit local circumstances and include local stakeholders but should also be outward looking. Any suggestions as to Board members or comments on the structure to be sent direct to AB.

Action: Any comments on proposed structure and board members to be sent direct to Andy Bell

6.0 BRs as an Economic Driver

6.1 Richard Butler reported that the NW Devon Economic Partnership is looking at how the Branton Burrows BR can help economic development in the area. The Partnership, including major employers, district councils and the RDA, was seeking to establish a project building on the BR designation and

the benefits for tourism and other business of the quality of the environment. The aim was to establish a holistic approach rather than an individual project view and had brought unexpected allies in support of the BR designation.

6.2 AB commented that there remained some points on sustainability to get across and that the project would have to recognise that some messages would not be appropriate to associate with the BR designation.

6.3 It was noted that the Euromab network was exploring the concept of *quality economies* and proposed that the Devon partnership should make links with this initiative.

7.0 MAB Publicity Brochure

7.1 A draft of the brochure prepared by Martin Price with Richard Butler had been circulated. The aim of the brochure was to explain the purpose of BRs and to give examples of ways in which they were of value to the communities affected. The group welcomed the draft and made a number of comments, including

- The case study examples should make more clear why they are included;
- The section on benefits should come earlier in the text, with less focus on process and background to BRs;
- Reference should be made to existing reserves and the current review process; and
- A comparison with World Heritage Sites should be included

7.2 Further comments should be sent to Martin Price as soon as possible. Layout of the brochure will be done during March and a copy circulated to the committee for comment.

Action: All to send comments on draft brochure to MP by end March

8.0 Urban Forum annual report

8.1 The report from MAB Urban Forum was noted

9.0 Proposals for urban biosphere reserves

9.1 As time was short and Pete Frost was unable to attend and introduce the paper, it was agreed that this item should be carried over for consideration at the next meeting.

10.0 AOB

10.1 Rachel Hellings reported that the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and an implementation plan were currently being finalised.

10.2 It was agreed that the next meeting should consider the committee's priorities and develop a workplan.

Action: All to consider and prepare proposals for next meeting

10.3 It was suggested that the committee should consider how best to forge closer links with the UK BAP process.

Action: All to consider and bring proposals to the next meeting

10.4 An item on what is happening in the wider Euromab network should be included on the next agenda.

Action: To include item on agenda for next meeting

11.0 Date of next meeting

It was agreed that it would be helpful for the committee to meet more frequently. A date should be sought at the end of June.