

**UK MAB Committee Meeting  
2 September 2004  
Temple Quay, Bristol**

**Minutes**

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Present	Andy Swash (chair) (Defra)	Moira Anderson (Defra)
	Andy Bell (Devon CC)	Rachel Hellings (SNH)
	Martin Price (UHI)	Pete Frost (CCW)
	Richard Partington (CA)	Tim Hill (EN)
	Richard Butler (Braunton Burrows BR)	Diana Mortimer (JNCC)

For items 6-9: Richard Bradford, Richard Clark, Barry Phillips (Somerset Levels and Moors Partnership (LAMPS))

Apologies	Ian Melville (SE)	Annie Smith (WCL)
	John Box (Urban Forum)	Kaveh Zehadi (UNEP)

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**1.0 Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 The chair welcomed all present, especially new members of the group: Richard Partington, who had replaced Richard Lloyd on his retirement from the CA, and Pete Frost from CCW.

**2.0 Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

2.2 Action to clarify the election procedure to the ICC. MA reported that nominations to the ICC should be made through the UK UNESCO National Commission and Permanent Delegation. It was agreed that it would be a positive step for the committee to be represented on the ICC. This would contribute to its work in supporting the development of UK Biosphere Reserves. If elected, the UK MAB Committee chair should be the committee's representative on the ICC. AS reported that he planned to attend the forthcoming ICC in October. It was agreed that MA should follow up nomination procedure with UNESCO.

***ACTION: SECRETARIAT TO TAKE FORWARD NOMINATION TO ICC  
ELECTION***

2.3 Action to contact the British Council had not yet been completed.

***ACTION: SECRETARIAT TO FOLLOW UP***

2.4 Action to establish an education working group. It was agreed that the task for the committee should be to raise awareness of BRs among education professionals and to promote their opportunities to act as demonstration sites

for testing sustainable development. Braunton Burrows were considering developing an education policy and it was agreed that this would be useful in providing the basis for a national policy. MP proposed that the committee consider developing a publicity brochure for education professionals. A summary of education activities in Braunton Burrows and any examples from other BRs would be discussed at the next meeting.

***ACTION: PRESENTATION(S) ON EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN UK BRs AT NEXT MEETING (AB AND OTHERS TO CONSIDER).***

2.5 Action to clarify the current standing of MAB with the UK National Commission and its possible representation on the UK MAB Committee. MA reported that the Commission had been closed for a while but was in the process of being re-established. Contact would be made as soon as possible.

***ACTION: SECRETARIAT TO TAKE FORWARD CONTACT WITH THE NATIONAL COMMISSION***

2.6 Action to write to the Secretary of State about government policy on future of BRs. Following consultation, the proposed letter to the SoS about government policy on biosphere reserves had instead been sent to more appropriate contacts in each country. No response had yet been received. It was agreed that more political support would encourage access to funding sources such as HLF for the individual BRs. BRs could make practical contributions to the delivery of country biodiversity strategies and to commitments for management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)

***ACTION: SECRETARIAT TO CIRCULATE LETTER TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS***

2.7 Action to invite the Minister to visit Braunton Burrows BR was on hold pending replies to the above letter.

2.8 Action to table a report from UNESCO MAB. A report had been circulated. The Committee thanked Jane Robertson for her helpful input.

2.9 AS reported that the publicity brochure '*Biosphere reserves: The opportunities and potential benefits for people living in and around them*' had been published and widely distributed. Feedback from recipients had been very positive and the Committee extended its grateful thanks to Martin Price and Richard Butler for their work in producing it.

### **3.0 Dyfi BR conference**

3.1 A report of the conference had been circulated AS, AB and PF had attended the conference 9–11 June at Machynlleth. It was noted that the public meeting had demonstrated a very positive view of the BR. PF reported that the conference had contributed to momentum in Dyfi. A steering group was now being established with the intention of employing a community liaison officer to further develop the BR. It was anticipated that the

consultation period would take 18–24 months and this would coincide with the next review of UK BRs. The Committee congratulated the organisers on a successful event, details of which can be found at:

<http://www.ecodyfi.org.uk/biosphereproject/index.html>

#### **4.0 Developments at existing BRs**

4.1 AB circulated a report on developments at Braunton Burrows. As well as the first meeting of the management board, particular attention was drawn to proposals for a development at Bideford which would combine education facilities, an Oceanic Centre, office and retail space. AB sought the Committee's support for the development in principle, recognising its contribution to the sustainable development of the area. It was agreed that a letter of support should be written. A copy of the letter would also be sent to the UNESCO Secretariat, as they might be willing to indicate support as well.

***ACTION: SECRETARIAT TO DRAFT A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT ON BEHALF OF THE UKMAB***

4.2 RH reported that Taynish and Galloway Reserves were both showing interest in putting forward a new application that would meet the Seville criteria. Two project officers had been employed through HLF funding to take forward the Dalriada project at Taynish. In Druidibeg, a feasibility study for a community buy-out of the local estate was being carried out. BR status could act as a positive umbrella for future development.

4.3 TH reported that an art and landscape project had been run in Moor House – Upper Teesdale. In North Norfolk, Peter Lambley had taken over from Mike Rooney as manager.

#### **5.0 Ecosystem Approach**

5.1 Diana Mortimer gave a presentation on the [Ecosystem Approach](#) (EA). It set out the principles underpinning the EA and identified strong synergies between EA and BRs. EA could provide tools and approaches for the management of BRs. Diana was developing a UK sourcebook (database) of EA case studies, and BRs could provide useful examples. Diana was invited to return and update the Committee on progress with the case studies in a year's time.

***ACTION a: SECRETARIAT TO POST ECOSYSTEM APPROACH PRESENTATION ON WEBSITE***

***ACTION b: RH TO APPROACH COLLEAGUES IN SNH ABOUT POSSIBLE SCOTTISH EXAMPLES.***

***ACTION c: EA TO AGAIN BE INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA IN TWO MEETINGS' TIME.***

#### **6.0 Urban Forum**

6.1 The Urban Forum annual report 03-04 had been circulated. It is available on the urban forum website at <http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk/work.htm>. The Committee extended their thanks to the authors of the report for producing such a well-written and comprehensive report. PF explained that

the aims of the forum were to raise awareness, stimulate research and influence policy on urban biodiversity. He drew attention in particular to the urban wildlife award for excellence and invited committee members to consider sites, publications and people they consider should be nominated (for more information on the award see <http://www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk/awards/awards.htm>).

***ACTION: ALL TO CONSIDER NOMINATIONS FOR THE AWARD AND SEND TO SECRETARY OF THE URBAN FORUM.***

## **7.0 Urban Biosphere Reserves**

7.1 Papers had been circulated on the application of the Biosphere Reserve concept to urban areas. PF gave a presentation on the reasoning behind proposals to include nominations for urban areas as Biosphere Reserves. About 50% of the world's population live in urban areas and recognition of the co-existence of people with biodiversity in those areas would contribute to raising awareness of sustainable development issues. PF reported that the MAB Urban Group expected to agree criteria for the designation of urban BRs in the autumn.

## **8.0 Proposal for an urban BR – Plantsbrook**

8.1 Birmingham City Council had submitted an outline proposal for an urban BR in the heart of Birmingham based on Sutton Park NNR. Comments were sought from the committee on taking the proposal forward.

8.2 The committee welcomed the interest shown in BR status and considered the outline to be a good start towards a full proposal. It was noted that the International Co-ordinating Council (ICC) criteria for urban BRs should be published later in the year and suggested that it may be advisable to wait for these criteria before making a firm proposal. However, a number of comments were made on issues the team developing the proposal might wish to consider at this stage in taking the proposal forward:

- The proposed site is relatively small and consideration should be given to including parts of the urban area within the zones.
- A much more extensive transition area should be included, encompassing parts (or all) of Birmingham and the wider W. Midlands area.
- As an example, Cannock Chase was suggested as an additional core area, with the buffer zone extending between the two cores.
- The inclusion of Sustainable Urban Drainage was welcomed.

## **9.0 Proposal for a Somerset levels and Moors BR**

9.1 Richard Clark and Richard Bradford, Chair and Officer of the Somerset Levels and Moors Partnership (LAMP) respectively, presented proposals for a BR covering the area. There were a range of existing designations in the area but the partnership was seeking a cohesive umbrella designation that would encompass the area as a whole. They considered that BR status would be an ideal mechanism as it reflects the importance of areas around the existing designated sites in providing support, and would act as an enabler for promoting action. LAMP was leading on the proposal in partnership with LAs,

agencies and local communities. A management plan is currently under development. The partnership was seeking the advice of the Committee with a view to presenting a formal proposal to the UKMAB Committee and thence to the Secretary of State and UNESCO in 2005.

9.2 The committee welcomed the draft proposal which had clearly been well thought through. The LAMP proposed to submit a draft application to the UKMAB Committee by Christmas 2004 with a view to obtaining comments before making a formal submission which would be considered at the next Committee meeting which was scheduled for mid-February 2005.

### **10.0 Workplan**

10.1 The workplan should include goals for the next year and a longer-term plan to help structure the work of the Committee to the date of the next BR review. Due to shortage of time it was agreed that the workplan would be drafted by correspondence and considered in more detail at the next meeting. All items for inclusion to be sent to MA by 30 September.

***ACTION: ALL TO SEND PROPOSED ITEMS FOR THE WORKPLAN TO SECRETARIAT BY 30 SEPTEMBER.***

### **11.0 Date of next meeting**

Weds and Thurs 9-10 February 2005 at Temple Quay House and Somerset Levels.