

Avon BAP Agriculture Group Meeting

Agenda

March 5th 2008

10am – 12.30pm

Duchy of Cornwall Office, Newton St Loe

Chair: Chris Westcott (NE)

Minutes: Matt Hamilton

Avon
Biodiversity Partnership



The variety of life

Item	Actions
<p>1. Introductions & apologies</p> <p>Present: Chris Westcott (NE), Matt Hamilton (ABP), Lucy Rogers (AWT), Mark Smith (FWAG),</p> <p>Apologies: Nick Mould (Duchy), Tim McGrath (AWT), Robert Moreton (Tortworth estate), Ann Fay (British Horse Society)</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CW reported that after talking to Phillipa Mansfield, NE can probably find funding for the Horse Grazing event discussed at the previous meeting if FWAG can organise and run it.• MS to investigate whether an event could be held this summer - location would need to be considered, speakers could include South Glos Council and British Horse Society. CW and MS to investigate and progress• MH reported that an event may tie in with the launch of the South Glos SPD on Horses - Sally Pattison will know more	CW/MS
<p>3. HLS update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CW gave an update on HLS:• In the Avon, Glos. and Wilts area, 10 HLS agreements were approved in the last round, 1 of these was in Avon.• NE have been looking at phase 2 of the biodiversity priority target mapping. The draft maps were examined and LR reported on the input AWT had given to the process.• MS highlighted some key arable flora areas that hadn't been highlighted and asked for FWAG to be consulted.• CW reported that further consultations would be taking place over the next few weeks to which he will feed in, stressing the unique 'urban fringe' nature of Avon. More information should be known by the next meeting and can be discussed in more depth then.	
<p>4. Implication of the new set aside levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MH passed around a set of DEFRA press releases on the new set aside levels - 0% for the coming year. DEFRA are undertaking a study to monitor the impacts this has. MH to circulate press releases through the BAP Bulletin.• All agreed that this had the potential to negatively affect biodiversity, but unsure of what, if anything, we can do about it. CW to investigate within NE to try and identify the best way	MH

forward.	CW
<p>5. Grassland project update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS gave an update on the Grasslands Project: • The fencing on Goblin Combe has now been completed and a huge amount of scrub has been cleared. Water is due to be installed imminently and Tim Curley is liaising with a local grazer who has a flock of hebridean sheep • Little Solsbury - fencing has been completed and 60 days worth of scrub clearance done. Volunteer group from university to do some more clearance in the autumn. There is also around £10k left in the budget to be spent before the end of November when the project ends. • CW asked about the possibility of getting the sites into HLS. MS replied that Goblin Combe was a possibility as it was a SSSI. Little Solsbury could be more complicated as it is common land, but probably worth a go • MH to organise a site visit to Little Solsbury for after the next meeting. 	MH
<p>6. Living Landscapes Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LR reported that Tubney were positive after the meeting in November. As AWT don't have the cash reserves to underwrite the project, they were looking to the April deadline to submit the bid in order to give sufficient time to raise the 60% match funding needed. Money is now starting to come in and AWT will keep the partnership informed on progress 	LR
<p>7. Arable Farmland Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH reported that all AWT records for arable plants had been digitised onto a GIS layer and showed the resultant map. • CW suggested cross-referencing the records with John Martin's FEP list of arable plants - this was agreed. • CW to contact BRERC to see if they have any additional records that can be added to the GIS layer. The next stage will then be to compare the locations of arable plant hotspots with a map of farms under environmental stewardship, to see if the land is already being managed favourably for the arable plants. CW to progress 	CW
<p>8. Updates around the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS reported that Jenny Phelps, formerly of the Cotswolds AONB was now working for Gloucestershire FWAG • CW reported that NE (West of England Team) had two new members of staff, Kevin Turner who is working on planning and Angus Bloomfield who will be taking on Severn Estuary work for the West of England Team. In addition two new adverts for planning posts (one of them marine) have been posted. 	
<p>9. Next meeting date Tuesday 12th August, from 10-12.30pm at Duchy of Cornwall Offices, Newton St. Loe. To be followed by a site visit to Little Solsbury</p>	