

Avon BAP Coastal and Marine Group Meeting
24th September 2007, 10.00pm – 12.30 pm
Avon Wildlife Trust

Chair: Matt Hamilton
Minutes: James Field



Item	Actions
<p>1 Introductions & apologies</p> <p>Present: Matt Hamilton (Avon Biodiversity Partnership), Richard Bland (BNS), Allan Davies (WEP), James Field (North Somerset Levels & Moors), David Bird (UWE), Emma Hook (AWT volunteer).</p> <p>Apologies: Lucy Rogers (AWT), Sue Ford (EA) Don Metcalf (Bristol Channel Federation of Sea Anglers), Robin Marshall-Ball (BASC), Mark Courtiour (NT), Tim Corner (BRERC), Helen Hall (BCC), David Villis (SGC), Ruth Barden (WW), Mary Wood (AWT), Angus Bloomfield (MCS).</p>	
<p>2. Minutes from last meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH reported that Don Metcalf was standing down from the group due to ill health. The group thanked Don for his contribution and wished him a speedy recovery. • MH reported that Sue Ford had recently left the Environment Agency and so would no longer be attending. MH to investigate who will take Sue and Dons places on the group. • MH reported that Angus Bloomfield was the new MCS contact for the group, but that he was unable to attend this meeting. • MH reported that NE were currently recruiting for Mark Will's role and that whoever is appointed would be the most suitable person to represent NE on the group 	MH
<p>3. Lobbying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group discussed whether it was possible for it to lobby on issues such as the Severn Barrage. Difficulties exist with LA reps being in the group. But issues can be discussed by the group and awareness raising carried out, leaving lobbying to individual organisations. 	

<p>4. Severn Barrage- update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH distributed draft position statement from SECG on Severn barrage. • RB suggested the need for local MP's email addresses. MH to follow up. • AD suggested that report lacks alternative suggestions to barrage and should present sustainable alternative options e.g. turbines, lagoons, - linking to the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC). • AD suggested a potential challenge to the barrage might be its relationship to nuclear power stations. Also linking the notion of changing climate as estuary levels will rise anyway. • MH commented that the estuary is a complex system and that the idea of the barrage aiding flood alleviation is a myth. • MH reported that Lucy Rogers is looking at RSWT SW response in order to bring in expertise in the fields of hydrology and salt composition for better knowledge on the direction of conservation for the estuary. • AD reported that the SDC's report was due in the next few weeks. MH to circulate to group 	<p>MH</p> <p>MH</p>
<p>5. Role of the group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH raised the issue that whilst the group was sharing information well, it was struggling to take action, mainly because most issues affecting the estuary needed action at a higher level. He asked the group whether in light of this, and falling attendance they wanted to consider meeting less frequently. • RB commented that this group must remain active as we have an important role in raising awareness of the wildlife importance of the estuary. • MH reported that he was considering restarting the communications group and that they could raise awareness of the importance of the estuary with expert input from this group. • JF suggested communication by email and meeting when necessary. • RB suggested a quarterly newsgroup, or a focus group news page on ABP website. • MH to look into adding news page on website, as clearer and more accessible than list of publications. • DB reported that there may be research opportunities with the Landfill Tax grant scheme. Nature Bureau Project is a company that specialises in LTCS applications on a no win, no fee basis. Applications would need voluntary input, which could be provided by WTs and other conservation trusts. Suggestion of remote sensing surveys around the estuary to establish a baseline data set against which further monitoring could be done. DB has access to analytical equipment. • MH suggested that the group could continue to meet every six months to look into what research has been done on the estuary in the last 10 years, determine what further research was needed and work in partnership with UWE to undertake it. • Potential projects were discussed including combining radar tracking of bats and the monitoring of birds night-time movements, to determine the influences of wind turbines on their populations. • DB reported that Cardiff University had undertaken a literature review of all research on the Severn Estuary. MH to get copy of this to bring to next meeting. 	<p>MH</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other members to bring details of research on the estuary in the last ten years that they are aware of to the next meeting • It was agreed that the group would next meet 2-3 weeks after the publication of the SDC's report into tidal energy was published to discuss the groups response to this and to further discuss collaborative research projects. 	ALL
<p>6. Chair of the group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As neither NE or EA are currently represented on the group, MH will act as temporary chair and a permanent replacement will be discussed at the next meeting. 	
<p>7. Updates around the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RB reported that wader numbers are being recorded around the estuary but data is not yet finalised. • JF reported that the NS Levels and Moors project is looking at expanding and the possibility of adapting the project to involve more estuarine issues, not just wetlands. • AD reported that North Somerset Council are distributing leaflets focussing on coastal areas around North Somerset but also taking into account areas in Bristol. • DB reported that UWE recent research shows doubling fish numbers in the estuary, and also the monitoring of heavy metals shows a decrease. Suggestion of lower pollution levels. • MH reported that the MCS had produced a marine LBAP guidance document. • MH reported that BASC with AWT would be running a training day on mink rafts on October 11th. Anyone interested in attending should contact JF or Robin Marshall-Ball asap. • MH reported that the Avon BAP atlas has now been published, and that a visioning workshop was being held on Oct 17th focussing on one SNA, with the aim of proofing the BAP Atlas and examining how best to integrate it. Another workshop is planned in the new year to raise awareness of Nature Map and the Avon BAP Atlas. 	
<p>9. Next meeting date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be arranged shortly after the publication of the SDC report. 	