

Avon BAP Steering Group Meeting
 10th October 2007, 10.00pm – 12.30pm
 Avon Wildlife Trust
 Chair: John Martin (NE)
 Minutes: Matt Hamilton



Agenda	
<p>1. Introductions & apologies</p> <p>Present: John Martin (NE), Matt Hamilton (ABP), Dan Merrett (BANES), Melissa Clarkson (EA), Tim Corner (BRERC), Lucy Rogers (AWT), Rob Bacon (BZG), Susan Stangroom (NSC), Helen Hall (BCC).</p> <p>Apologies: Neil Sherwood (SWBP), Sally Pattison (SGC), Chris Westcott (NE), Allan Davies (WEP), Dave Willis (SGC).</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JM reported that a new NE team was being formed for the West of England (formerly Avon). The team leader for the West of England Land Management team (schemes, SSSIs etc) will be Jonathan East. Chris Bentley is team leader for the WoE Government team which covers planning, open access and also historic environment work. Dagmar Junghanns, based in Devizes, is team leader providing cover in WoE for NNRs, volunteers and education (as well as Wiltshire). • JM reported that there were two marine posts to be filled as well as the team member post concentrating on SSSI work (vacant since Kate Jeffries left). • LR asked about contacts for funding matters. JM reported that he would investigate. Phil Tolerton is the Regional Account Manager for the Wildlife Trusts, Chris Bentley is the local (Avon WT) Account Manager, JM is dealing with the LBAP memorandum of understanding. • MH reported that he will be meeting with HH and TC later in November to discuss the Avon and Bristol BAP lists 	
<p>3. Management and funding of the LBAP Co-ordinators time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JM reported that NE have just announced a change to the way they will be funding LBAP co-ordination from next year. Funding has been increased, but is only being provided to county level LBAPs. JM will be attending a meeting next week to find out more and will then meet with MH/LR and DM to discuss the implications for their organisations • MH explained to the group the difference this change in funding would make to the amount of time his role was able to spend on LBAP co-ordination work. The new funding will mean his post is now funded for just over 50% of its time to work on LBAP co-ordination as opposed to around 30% currently (see attached sheet) 	<p>JM/MH/ LR/DM</p>
<p>4. Nature Map Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH reported on progress towards the Biodiversity South West funded Nature Map Visioning workshops discussed at the last meeting. The first of two workshops will be held on October 17th, with the aim of visioning the future of an example SNA 	

<p>(Lansdown) and proofing the BAP Atlas. A second meeting is then planned with a wider attendance to raise awareness of Nature Map and its position in policy.</p>	
<p>5. Avon BAP Leaflet/Newsletter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH reported that AWT have kindly agreed to fund the first edition of the new Avon BAP Newsletter. The newsletter will be produced in colour and aimed at a wide audience of BAP partners, key decision makers and the general public. MH explained that one of the newsletters roles was to raise the profile of the ABP, and to celebrate our partnership working. He asked all partners who had undertaken work towards the BAP in the last year to write a short article (with pics) that could be included in the newsletter. MH needs to receive all contributions by 16th November. 	<p>ALL</p>
<p>6. New BAP Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH reported that Fountain Timber had joined the ABP and that Astra Zeneca and Oldbury Power Station were in the process of signing up. MH reported that he aims to approach other potential partners such as Fresh & Wild, Yeo Valley and the Soil Association in the near future and asked if anyone could think of any other potential partners who should be approached. 	
<p>7. Funding sources available for BAP work – All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MH reported that the S. Glos Environment Body were looking for more applications MH reported that the Countdown 2010 grant had finished MH reported that the BBC's Breathing Places fund had been confirmed until at least 2009 HH asked what was happening with NE funding as she had been having great difficulty finding out. JM will investigate – contact Chris Bentley in the first instance. TC raised the issue of stretch targets within LAAs for which funding was available. There was general uncertainty about how to approach this area and it was agreed to put it on the agenda for the next meeting. MH to ask Sue Murtagh if she could talk to the group about it. JM to find out more from Basil Greenwood. 	<p>JM</p> <p>MH/JM</p>
<p>8. Work with Unitary Authority BAPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HH reported that the BCC BAP is getting there, she is currently working on the BAP list with MH and TC. They are hoping to appoint a BAP Co-ordinator SS reported that North Som had held an NERC awareness raising event to mark the halfway point of the BAP. Bat surveys are being undertaken by the wildlife wardens, and they are looking to strengthen links with parish councils. Possibly also looking at developing a template for the management of roadside verges. DM reported that BANES have found a volunteer to help progress the Bee Fly BAP. A new dormouse record has been found at Compton Martin, but NE funding for the BAP is being discontinued. 	
<p>9. Focus group updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see minutes from focus groups 	
<p>10. Progress with projects</p> <p>Grassland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little Solsbury – Fencing contractor went on site in March, but the rain forced him off with only a quarter of the fencing complete. Contractor seems reluctant to return to site, so MS is investigating alternative contractors. As a result, site has been ungrazed this year, but grassland botanical surveys have been done and photo's taken. 	

- Goblin Combe – Boundary has been cleared and fencing issues resolved. A mixture of stock netting, and dropper fencing will be used, contractors have been found and will start next month. Botanical surveys have been completed, and a local owner of Hebridean Sheep has agreed to graze.
- MS reported that as the fencing had cost more than anticipated, there was less money available for scrub clearance, and negotiations were underway with contractors for the steeper areas.

Pondways

- Report from Lydia Robbins:
 - Successfully sent out all the volunteers with an Accredited NE GCN licence so ahead of schedule in survey effort
 - some ponds couldn't be surveyed due to anomalies, permissions etc therefore number dropped slightly to around 90
 - Surveyed at least 80% of ponds which meets the HLF target - forms still being returned as final surveys were end of August
 - majority of volunteers have given lots of time and worked really hard
 - early results show a number of the ponds had been lost and not many GCN records
 - will go out this autumn/winter to ascertain pond presence for 2008
 - Ready to analyse data and HSI values - BRERC
 - Due to NE funding Pondways surveying private sites in 2008
 - consulted with experts from Pond Conservation and Herpetological Conservation Trust on best way of targeting ponds, mixed views! Will be finalised shortly and planned/permissions sorted through winter for 2008 season
 - Held invertebrate training day for Pondways volunteers with Dr. Mike Tynen, Aquatic Invertebrate Officer from Cheshire Wildlife Trust
 - Recruited a volunteer to the Biodiversity Team to assist with running of Pondways and volunteer support
 - Website outline agreed and ready to be launched in autumn
 - Budget regularly checked and to plan, application for 2008 funding due in October
 - Article in new issue of *Wildlife* about pond networks and creating a pond

Wildlife Champions

- The Wildlife Champions project was launched as planned, and received good coverage from the press. Unfortunately very little interest was received from potential champions and so it was decided at the end of year review, not to continue with the project and to divert the remaining funding into the water voles project.

Urban Gardens

- MH reported that he has not had the time to progress this project, but that he now has three volunteers to replace the ones that left at Easter, so he hopes to progress this before the next meeting.

Arable Farmland

- MH reported that the special meeting of the agriculture group had decided against a

large scale project, so he is now looking at developing a smaller scale project targeting the hotspots for scarce arable plants.

Bristol Birdwatch

- MH reported that an online reporting system had been developed for this years Bird Watch. The launch unfortunately clashed with a major announcement about the Severn Barrage and so received relatively little publicity on the day. However a good amount of coverage was received over the next month in bits and pieces and lots of new requests for recording packs have been received.

Water Vole

- Funding has now been confirmed from Bristol Zoo and Wessex Water and the project is underway being led by Lydia Robbins at AWT with support from MH. The first stage is to identify who is responsible for managing each rhine, and then approaching those people regarding management for water voles.

Water Trees

- MH reported that he has not had the time to progress this project, but that he now has three volunteers to replace the ones that left at Easter, so he hopes to progress this before the next meeting.

BAP Atlas

- Project has now been completed, published, publicised and made available online.

11. Regional and National Issues

- MH reported on behalf of NS:
- A position statement on Nature Map is being developed. It is currently with the Nature Map Strategic Working Group for comments and will be circulated when this process is complete.
- The Biodiversity South West website is currently being re-developed. We will be sending around versions for comment prior to it going live. We also need to check that links to organisations in Avon are correct. The site will be live by the end of the year. It is not going to duplicate what already existing on your own sites, it will signpost to where the existing information is.
- NERC money. We have a meeting this Friday with Natural England with the aim of securing funds for county NERC workshops (watch this space).

12. Updates round the table

- MH reported TWT had produced guidance leaflets for Las regarding the NERC Duty
- MH reported that one of his new volunteers was creating a display for the Avon BAP that could be used at events and conferences.
- MH reported that the SDC report on tidal energy on the Severn had now been published online.
- RB reported that the Zoo were planning four main events for next summer on: plant conservation, freshwater invertebrates, insects and moths & bats.
- TC reported that there was a green fair at the museum. MH to display the new ABP

display.	MH
13. AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH suggested reforming the Communications group to deal with the NERC Act and publicising the biodiversity value of the Severn Estuary. The group agreed. • TC reported that Secret World do a lot of work rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing BAP species and would be a good potential partnership members. MH to investigate. • HH reported that Linda Tucker's post has been removed and that there are no local contacts for species protection any more. It was felt that this would have severe adverse effects on protected species. LA ecologists to write to NE as a group. JM to investigate the best person to write to 	MH HH/DM/ DV/NM/ JM
11. Next meeting date and location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 10th January 1000-1230 at AWT 	