

Avon BAP Steering Group Meeting  
 20th September 2005, 2.00pm – 4.00pm  
 BRERC Ashton Court Visitors Centre  
 Chair: Alison Slade (B&NES)  
 Minutes: Lucy Rogers



Item	Actions
<p><b>1. Introductions &amp; apologies</b>  <b>Present:</b> Alison Slade (B&amp;NES), Tim Corner (BRERC), Helen Hall (BCC), John Martin (RDA), Rachel Sharp (AWT), Melissa Clarkson (EA), Allan Davies (JSPTU), Lucy Rogers (Avon Biodiversity Partnership), Ian Ross (BTCV).   <b>Apologies:</b> Kate Jeffreys (EN), Michael Legg (JSPTU), Sam Jarvis (NSC), Susan Stangroom (NSC), David Villis (SGC), Neil Maddison (Bristol Zoo), Rob Spence (FC). Karen Renshaw (B&amp;NES).</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</b>            RS to arrange meeting with UA's to discuss MOA, UA contributions and services to be provided by co-ordinator. This is underway.             JH to circulate SW biodiversity partnership MOA – LR can do this if required.             KJ/RS to discuss in-principal agreement with EN/Avon Bio Partnership. An MOA with EN has been agreed.             RS to write funding strategy and circulate to steering group for discussion at next steering group meeting – see 8. AOB.             Avon BAP bird list – LR to investigate and report back at next steering group meeting.             Marine Week – Events good but low attendance.             1 – year since launch update report. As Jenny has left, LR to write basis and develop format of report and circulate to steering group. Steering group to contribute thoughts/quotes for report, in particular a paragraph from KJ as chair.             JH to feed back to NM. LR will be in touch with NM about Communications group (see 4).</p>	<p>LR</p> <p>LR</p> <p>LR ALL KJ</p> <p>LR</p>
<p><b>3. Update on Focus groups</b>   <b>Water and Wetlands meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September</b> - MC reported that meeting had been poorly attended. MC will contact group members to ask if they are still interested in attending the meetings. The group discussed ways of making the meetings more inviting such as site visits or talks. The meeting was well focused though, covering discussions of the Pond project, and water vole and crayfish conservation issues. James Field will circulate a survey and monitoring strategy for Somerset Levels and Moors project amongst group members.</p>	<p>MC</p>

**Woodlands meeting on 15th September** – RS reported that the meeting was well attended and good. The group discussed mapping woodland in Avon using NBN BAP priority habitat data and WGS data to produce a map showing existing woodland to maintain, existing woodland to restore, and woodland to create. Also discussed the possibility of surveying and mapping veteran trees. It is very important that this mapping is completed to establish BAP maintenance, restoration and creation targets. Deer damage to woodlands was also discussed, particularly producing a leaflet to advise on deer damage and control, using a leaflet from the Deer Initiative as a model.

RS highlighted the fact that many new projects will be based on SNA's, which may overlap geographically with local BAP projects, or species projects. This might cause problems both logistically with many different organisations contacting the same landowners, and financially, if projects are competing for the same funds. Requires good liaison.

**Agriculture meeting on 13th September** – JM reported that meeting discussed the problems of the new agri-environment scheme, and the formation of Natural England from RDS, EN and parts of CA. The grassland project was also discussed.

The steering group then discussed the RSS and its implications for local development. Different authorities are interpreting it differently. There is a workshop planned at AWT on this subject. Basil Greenwood or Mike Oxford could be invited to talk on this subject.

TC/BRERC will not attend any more Focus group meetings for now, or therefore host meetings at BRERC because of a request from BRERCs Steering group.

#### **4. Communication group**

The Steering group discussed reconvening the Communication group, particularly to discuss approaching the business sector to get them involved, and also to discuss the 'champions for biodiversity' scheme, and the Avon BAP partnership website. LR to talk to NM and organise.

LR/NM

#### **5. Update on Pond project (LR)**

Project brief is to enable communities to carry out survey, management and pond creation work and to provide information for landowners. The work will be carried out in GCN hotspots, but is not intended as a comprehensive GCN survey of Avon.

This project is a 2-year project to be led by ARAG, with a part time member of staff to co-ordinate volunteers to survey, manage and create ponds for GCN. The plan is to apply to HLF for funding before the next W&W meeting in March. The brief has been sent to HLF and they are keen. HLF have a 3-month turnaround for small projects like this. We still need to find match funding from somewhere else – Wessex Water? EA?, Bristol water confirmed. We applied to WW for match funding of 5k over 2 years, and have been shortlisted and asked to present, and are waiting to hear back.

When the application is being written for HLF funding, we will circulate drafts to the W&W group, steering group and communication group before sending in.

A more comprehensive GCN survey of Avon could be done in the future, but is beyond the scope of this project.

#### **6. Update on grassland Project (LR)**

Main points of update since the last meeting are:

- In consultation with FWAG about taking lead on project.
- Applying for SITA funding – December?

- Need ideas for match funding, and how to manage grassland better.
- 3K from EN to scope up project
- Sites identified and mapped with help from RDS.
- Plan to get sites into Environmental Stewardship scheme
- 3-5 year project dependent on funding
- Full time project officer and part time marketing officer.
- Discussed at the recent Agriculture focus group that will need mechanism for increasing number of sites, particularly if lots of sites are registered as part of the agri-environment scheme.

RS has talked with Mark Smith from FWAG and is waiting to hear from FWAGs head office.

The maps need to be lined up with SNA's (can be printed out from regional observatory website).

Agreed that LR should tackle the pond project before the grassland project as it is easier and quicker to complete.

## 7. Updates round the table

**Melissa Clarkson** Melissa Clarkson, Craig Stenson and Pete Sibley (EA) recently looked at some sites for reintroducing crayfish in N Somerset. Good sites found as no Signal Crayfish there. Will put together a brief to propose translocation. This will be a partnership project. Recently had a site visit with Paula Spiers from the Avon Valley partnership about an Otter holt near Bath.

**Helen Hall** BAP partnership meeting next week. The Bristol BAP will hopefully be launched next year, City Council will lead.

RS and HH to look at water voles in Avonmouth soon and talk to landowners. Development has realigned rhines and pollution problems.

**Ian Ross** Wanted to attend steering group meeting to find out more, as his staff are attending Focus group meetings.

**Lucy Rogers** Busy meeting focus groups and getting to grips with implementation of BAP. The rest of the ring bound BAPs will go to libraries in Bristol. The Crayfish SAP is now on the website.

**Alison Slade** Dormouse on Doorstep project to start soon. 3 year part-time project to cover B&NES and Sglos. Sally Pattison has started work again on the Field Boundaries Project.

Update for S.Glos: Drafting action plans for ponds, dormice, old meadows and pastures etc. Will consult group on this.

B&NES: Launching action plans soon. Water vole awareness raising on the Kennet & Avon Canal by postcards.

**Tim Corner** Producing a Moth distribution atlas with John Martin. Also busy with RSS targets, and a project bid for a South Glos dormouse project.

<p><b>Allan Davis</b> Working on Forest of Avon planning – encouraging developers to contribute both trees and money. SPD – Planners incorporating biodiversity into their work. Also working on refinement of PPS9 – how to deal with international sites.</p> <p><b>John Martin</b> Not as many applicants for ELS (6000 nationally) or HLS (even fewer) as RDS had expected and difficulties have slowed things down. Most landowners still struggling with single payment scheme. Difficulties include IT system, problems with application packs, mapping and problems with Rural land register. HLS needs to be promoted more and there needs to be access to training. JM will circulate list of people who want training, so group can add their names if they want.</p> <p>Reorganisation of RDS, EN and parts of CA to Natural England in 2006. New organisation very community based, not much reference to biodiversity, protected species licensing or BAP targets. There will be 2 Avon teams, one land based dealing with SSSI's and agri-environment schemes, and the second dealing with the Severn estuary.</p> <p><b>Rachel Sharp</b> Involved with development at Folly Farm, LRs new start, RSS and community strategy work. Also involved in project bids for rebuilding biodiversity (Tubney trust), Lesser Horseshoe bat grills (NSC Aggregate Levy money), veteran tree work, white-clawed crayfish, wolverines, dormice, North Somerset Levels and Moors project and bid work for Wessex Water catchment project.</p>	<p><b>JM</b></p>
<p><b>8. AOB</b></p> <p><b>Funding Lucys post</b> - RS has looked at funding and presented strategy for discussion. 2005/06 is OK. The partnership now have an MOA with EN and is developing one with Bristol Zoo. It is difficult for the UA's to enter into an MOA, but RS suggested that an agreement in principle might be achievable, even if not legally binding. RS asked if UA's could increase their contribution over a 3 year period. Suggested that RS contacts budget holders with each UA to discuss. RS highlighted that this increase would enable the post holder to concentrate on delivery of the Avon BAP rather than being distracted by direct project work.</p> <p>Birdwatch was not funded by NSC this year, only BCC. RS and HH to talk about Birdwatch.</p> <p>RS will talk to UAs individually about funding. Some financial support should come from the Grassland project, but more core funding is required to reap the benefits of an Avon wide approach to conservation, and needs to be resolved.</p> <p>The agreement with EN requires work on BAP and BARS. The agreement with Bristol Zoo requires work on 'Champions for biodiversity'.</p> <p>RS will circulate EN MOA and Bristol Zoo agreement (after checking first with EN and Zoo).</p>	<p><b>RS</b></p> <p><b>RS/HH</b></p> <p><b>RS/Uas</b></p> <p><b>RS</b></p>
<p><b>9. Next meeting date</b>  Tuesday December 6<sup>th</sup> 2.00 - 4.30pm at Brerc</p>	