

Minutes of the 6th WBAP Freshwater Meeting

Held at Ladywell House, Newtown at 10.30am on Wednesday March 16 2011

Present:

Huw Jones (HJ) Environment Agency Wales
Janet Buckles Environment Agency Wales
Rebecca Good (RG) Pond Conservation
Gareth Davies (GD) Welsh Assembly Government
Dai Roberts (DR) Riverfly Partnership Wales/SE Wales Rivers Trust
Adrian Lloyd Jones (ALI) North Wales Wildlife Trust
Dusitaporn Thomas (DT) (Dŵr Cymru)

Apologies:

Tristan Hatton Ellis (THE) Countryside Council for Wales
Helen Carriss
Robin Woodyatt
Emma Guy
Kris Roberts
Frank Jones
Rhian Thomas
Hannah Powell
Steve Ormerod

1. Welcome and Introductions

HJ welcomed Adrian Lloyd Jones and Dusitaporn Thomas to the group

2. Minutes / Actions of 5th meeting

- The minutes of the 5th meeting were accepted as a true record

Target & Actions for Aquatic BAP in Wales

Actions carried over:

- **HJ** to circulate link for ditch blocking leaflet to group members.
- **HJ** to lead on obtaining information regarding disinfection and Dikogammarus
- **RG** to circulate advice on temporary ponds

3. Update on existing activity and resources in Wales

3.1 Natural Environment Framework: work is ongoing

3.2 RG reported on progress with the Million Ponds Project.

- The third round of funding was over-subscribed and has now been closed. Ten sites with a total of 102 ponds are being funded.
- Four sites not being funded will be covered by EAW SW Biodiversity Team.

- Projects at all first round sites in Wales have been completed, two of the second round sites are still in progress.
- Funding may be available for training with Moel y Ci and Kenfig as possible venues.
- Environmental advisors contracted under Glastir may be available to work on targeted elements of Glastir this summer.
- Pond creation reporting is ongoing
- An application for flagship pond sites was made to Environment Wales before the deadline in February, but no response has been received so far. **Action:** HT & THE to flag this up.
- Work cannot be carried out under the Ponds for People project if funding is already available.

3.3 DR reported on Rivers Trust projects

- One site on the Teme has not been investigated for Potomanthus due to the river being in spate.
- Potomanthus surveys not completed as the time scale has meant that no funding could be obtained, but it may be possible to do the Wye & Usk in Spring 2011.
- There may be a chance of re-introducing Potomanthus to some sites. A reservoir population is needed in case of threat to the Wye population.
- Species dossiers & postcards are in preparation and will be published shortly.
- A query was raised regarding the possibility that the caddis species Isogenus may be extinct in North Wales. HJ suggested an opportunity for co-working on surveys, and that Dave Andrew should be contacted

3.4 GD gave an update on Glastir

- The application for the all-Wales element of Glastir has now been closed
- The scheme has received some negative publicity, but has been considered a success in the number of applications received.
- The minister has announced a review, with a report containing recommendations due in March 2011.
- There is a need to look at the practicality of the specifications and make them more attractive to farmers.
- The targeted element will have first contact manager visits this summer.
- The number of agreements will depend on uptake which will be affected by the fact that Tir Mynydd will be paid until 2012.
- Applicants will have the opportunity to review applications and make amendments.
- Tir Gofal agreements will have an option for extension to 2013, but extra options will have to be chosen to move to Glastir on other land.
- Some all-Wales options include tree planting

- The woodland creation element will be run by FCW as a stand-alone under Glastir. The aim is to achieve 100,000ha 62 of which have already been secured.
- Farmers may feel that it is worth buying marginal land to plant trees.
- A reduction in bracken control following the proposed ban on Asulux may lead to replacement of bracken with woodland.
- For Biodiversity planting there is no obligation to plant specific tree species, but expert advice is available.
- Any land over 3ha must have a customer reference number, but any land over 0.25ha can be registered.

3.5 DT reported on Dŷr Cymru issues

- Dŷr Cymru are looking at the possibility of working with CCW on a grip blocking project at Alwen.
- Funding is available from Ofwat to investigate improvement of water quality. 100K will go to Anglesey Fens project and 100K may be available for above work at Alwen. This would leave 1.8 million to spend on investigation over 5 years within the business plan.
- Work is being carried out on GIS layers to match CCW/EA priority catchments for water quality and water quantity, to expand benefits for Glastir.
- Dŷr Cymru's Surface Water Reduction Strategy could provide added value for water quality & water quantity.
- Dŷr Cymru can't subsidise farmers with direct contributions.

3.6 HJ gave an update on EAW issues

- EAW will be adopting WFD as core policy and Outcome 21 will be linked. Targets will change next year and remediation of protected sites will be the main target.
- There will be an holistic approach to catchment management with focus on individual polluters.
- There will be more consistency in area ownership with virtual teams to deliver WFD work on ground monitoring eg. river walks.
- There will be opportunities to increase WFD outcomes through the Hiraethog project and opportunities for multi-partner projects.
- Feasibility work regarding a merger with CCW & FCW is ongoing.
- The Afon Eden LIFE bid with CCW as a partner and Scottish Natural Heritage as lead, is going ahead and should include off-site works to deliver benefits for water quality. It may be possible to get farmers into Glasdir.

4. Update on reintroduction of beavers to Wales

A LI J gave a presentation on the Report of the Welsh Beaver Assessment Initiative

- Beavers are to be removed from the protected species list at the next review as numbers are increasing in Europe.
- Beavers can be shot under derogation.
- Dams can be moved or modified if they are blocking migration routes or causing damage.

- In other countries the presence of beavers can be shown to lead to an increase in salmon numbers.
- Licences may not be required to remove dams but would be required to move beavers.
- A query was raised re. monitoring of fish numbers prior to beaver release in order to compare figures from monitoring after release.

DR presented slides showing beaver damage to trees and dams that were barriers to fish in Scotland.

5. Policy Issues

None were raised.

6. Species Issues

A LI J's query re. water vole protection and key areas will be passed on to Rob Strachan.

7. LWBP Terms of Reference

The draft terms of reference were accepted with the following recommendations:

- Key contacts to be identified.
- In section on academic monitoring, change wording relating to Living Wales Workstream, scientific evidence in policy delivery. This should be 'promoted' rather than 'ensured'.
- Asking Local Record Centres (LRCs) to co-ordinate reporting for the Annual Report could add value to LRC services.
- LBAP representation to be clarified.

Action:

- **JB** to find out which members of WBAP Freshwater are also on Species Expert Group.
- Group actions should be put on BARS.

8. Invasives Update

Asian Clam: for further info contact Gabriel Wyn.

Dikerogammarus: HJ gave a summary of the current situation.

- Co-exists with zebra mussel with which they have complimentary camouflage.
- Mussels provide good substrate.
- May have been in Cardiff for several years.
- Displaces native species.

Himalayan Balsam: Eradication projects to continue in Alyn & Wheeler Valleys with some funding from EAW.

Action:

- **HJ** to circulate information from Mike Complin on Asian Clam.

- **THE** to raise enforcement of biosecurity with Welsh Assembly Government.

9. WAG contacts for FW Ecosystem Group

Topic areas to be influenced should be catchment scale management & WFD.

Actions:

HJ & THE to identify WAG contacts for selected topics.

DT to raise the matter of areas of priority with Diana Reynolds at next steering group meeting.

10. Grants Update

Will be discussed at the next meeting.

11. A.O.B.

The matter of choosing a group LBAP representative to replace Kate Williamson was raised as Kris Roberts is currently the only LBAP representative on the group.

Action: HJ & THE to discuss the above before the next meeting.

11. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held at Ladywell House on September 14 2011.