

Minutes of the 5th WBAP Freshwater Meeting

Held at St David's House, Newtown at 10.30am on Tuesday September 13 2010

Present:

Tristan Hatton Ellis (THE) Countryside Council for Wales
Huw Jones (HJ) Environment Agency Wales
Janet Buckles Environment Agency Wales
Rebecca Good (RG) Pond Conservation
Kate Williamson (KW) Snowdonia National Park Authority
Gareth Davies Welsh Assembly Government
Dai Roberts (DR) Riverfly Partnership Wales/SE Wales Rivers Trust
Helen Cariss (HC) Forestry Commission Wales
Kris Roberts Chris (KR) Torfaen County Council
Emma Guy (EG) Powys IBAP
Chris Uttley (CU) Countryside Council for Wales

Apologies:

Robin Woodyatt

1. Welcome and Introductions

THE welcomed Helen Cariss and Kris Roberts to the group.

2. Minutes / Actions of 4th meeting

The minutes of the 4th meeting were accepted as a true record

3. Target & Actions for Aquatic BAP in Wales

- No comments received following consultation period on website in June. Actions now accepted, but document to be kept live and updated regularly.
- Priority actions for 2010-11 were agreed and allocated during meeting. These will be finalised and circulated by September 27.

Action: All to provide further comments to THE by September 24.

Action: THE to write to BAP contacts highlighting the priority freshwater actions by September 27.

4. Update on existing activity and resources

- Freshwater pearl mussel: more survey work carried out this year, new populations found in the Irfon and the Afon Wen. Captive breeding programme ongoing.
- *Potamanthus*: DR reported visiting 3 potential sites on the Usk and one on the Taff. One of these sites had reasonable habitat and one was totally unsuitable. *Potamanthus* found on one site on the Teme.
- March Brown/Olive Upright: Probably many sites unknown, id work is difficult.

- Post cards produced for three species, work in progress on cards for full list of BAP invertebrates.
- Dossier produced for *Potamanthus*, plans to produce dossiers for full list of BAP invertebrates
- Arctic Charr: Eggs stripped from fish from Llyn Padarn, problems occurred with conditions in hatchery over the summer but 2000 fish still alive. New chiller to be purchased. Back up site being investigated.

Resources

- Bids needed by Sept 30 to be added to next years project list for EAW funding.
- Possible pond creation in Gwent with Caerphilly Council, HJ would be EAW contact in North Wales. **Action:** Comments to THE by Sept 29, THE to draft letter.
- CU mentioned two potential projects: 1. Peat bogs & deterioration in water quality – scope to develop investigation and catchment management work. Water companies may contribute regarding potential for reducing filtration costs. 2. Private sewage systems in SSSIs contributing to reduction in water quality. May be possible to identify properties concerned.
- KR suggested that the Forgotten Landscapes Project at Blaenavon World Heritage Site may be an appropriate a partnership project for the group. **Action:** RG to provide advice from Pond Conservation on temporary ponds.
- White-clawed crayfish ark: best contacts are Anglesey Sea Zoo, Mike Howe and John Taylor at Cynrig Hatchery. **Action:** RG to seek advice from John Taylor.

5. National Environment Framework

- Group has provided detailed comments for NEF Narrative 2 and 3, many of which have been taken forward in the final draft. THE thanked the group for their contribution. Concerns were still raised about the capacity and power of the group to deliver NEF and this could be a key issue for delivery.
- NEF will be launched by the Minister, Jane Davidson at the LBAP Seminar on Wednesday September 15, followed by further consultation.

6. Glastir progress

Gareth Davies gave an update on progress.

- Application packs to be issued on October 4, to be returned by applicants by November 22.
- Selection from 40 options, 28 points per hectare required to qualify.
- Score card to consist of all Wales and regional packages with additional package for dairy farms.
- Flat rate of £28 per hectare for profit foregone.
- There will be a requirement for maintenance following creation.

- Training events for habitat recognition and open surgeries to be held over the next few weeks.
- The possibility was raised of obtaining assistance from other organisations regarding the training programme, but this will be dependant on capacity.

Action: All to consider practicalities of providing relevant assistance

Action: GR to send details of open events to JB for circulation.

7. **Afonydd Cymru update**

- CCTV webcam on otters has been successfully used for educational work
- Volunteers in Carmarthenshire and Dee, Clwyd & Conwy catchments trained in herbicide application for Japanese Knotweed & Himalayan Balsam control.
- European fisheries fund administered by WAG has now been released to AC after financial difficulties have been resolved. However the timescale has been retained so delivering the work within the available time will be challenging, because the summer period when work is easiest has been lost.

8. **Million ponds update**

- Funds are available for pond creation in England & Wales, details on website. Third and final round for funding now open.
- Million ponds toolkit now online.
- Watervole species dossier now online, work on other dossiers in progress

9. **Policy issues**

- There does not appear to be a mechanism to control gravel dredging on non-main rivers or non-designated sites. HJ gave an example of issues on a specific site and said that he was not aware of any EAW policy regarding this practice.
- EG raised the difficult issue of assessing in-combination effects when commenting on planning applications for several egg units within the same catchment area. Waste spread on adjacent land can cause diffuse pollution problems.
- Flood Risk Management consultation will lead to national strategy for rivers and coasts. Natural processes approach could indicate specific benefits.
- New duties for Local Authorities regarding sustainable drainage in planning applications. LA is approving body and must adopt the system.
- Disinfection between riverine habitats. There are requirements for angling equipment but not for boats. Need to consider as standard procedure but legislation would be required.

Action: THE to send comments to WBAP policy group.

Action: Group to provide response, HJ to lead and CU & THE to circulate draft.

10. Species issues

Considered under other items

11. Freshwater Biodiversity Meeting proposal

CCW will not be hosting a Marine & Freshwater Seminar this year, but it may be possible to organise a Freshwater Biodiversity seminar instead. The group agreed that this would be a useful event.

Action: THE to look at possible resources for potential date in February and the possibility of inviting a representative from the non-natives group.

12. Any other Business

- Riverfly Partnership Conference to be held at The Natural History Museum in London on March 10 2011
- Information circulated by THE regarding the issue of *Dikerogammarus* in Grafham Reservoir, was discussed. In spite of the difficulties, hope was expressed that it could be contained.

13. Date of next meeting

- Agreed as Wednesday March 16 2010, at St Davids House.
- Janet Buckles to confirm room booking for St David's House