



Minutes of the 7th meeting of the Biodiversity Delivery Group
held on Monday 18th July 2022 at 1pm
in the Boardroom, Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture,
This Slieau Whallian, St Johns

Present:

Jan Gledhill – Independent Chair	(JG)
Aline Thomas – Senior Biodiversity Officer, DEFA	(AT)
Hannah Cawkwell – Environmental Officer, Manx Utilities (MU)	(HC)
Leigh Morris – CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust	(LM)
Neil Morris – CEO, Manx Bird Life	(NM)
Erica Spencer – Environmental Planner and Ecologist, Manx National Heritage	(ES)

In attendance:

Sophie Costain – Ecosystem Policy Officer (minutes) (via Teams)	(SC)
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22.16 Apologies

Richard Selman, John Payne, Andy Lees, Ken Milne, Sofia Rodriguez Fernandez – who has now left the DoI and will no longer be attending meetings -, Alan Jackson – who has now resigned from the meetings.

22.17 Consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on the 28th March 2022 (Paper A)

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record and signed.

22.18 Actions and matters arising from the February meeting

Action 1 - AT to send a blank template 2022/23 delivery plan to MNCF members and encourage them to report actions under the Biodiversity Strategy to her for inclusion in the main delivery plan – this action has been completed, but thus far only the Manx Bat Group have contributed tasks. The last MNCF meeting had to be rescheduled due to Covid and is going to be held in August. An agenda item on the BDG will be requested.

Action 2 - All BDG members to check over the 2021/22 end of year delivery plan to see if the end of year status is correct. Any corrections to be send to AT by Monday 4th April so that the Plan can be finalised and uploaded to the website – this action is complete, the plan was uploaded to the Government website in April.

Action 3 - LM to send the link to the Action for Wildlife webpage to all BDG members when it is live – this has not yet gone live so this action is ongoing.

ES was asked about the progress of the MNH Curraghs Land Management Plan. A draft has gone to the MNH Senior Management Group but ES has not heard back about this.

1. ES to get an update on the Curraghs Management plan and feedback to the BDG.

Savills have been commissioned by DEFA to do a review of the Wildlife Park, they have also been commissioned by MNH to come over to undertake a review of their buildings and landholdings but it was thought that this was part of a separate exercise. The Ecosystem Policy Team were not aware of

either of these reviews, but requested to be briefed because part of the land falls within the Ballaugh Curraghs ASSI and Ramsar site.

MNH have also been making some progress in speaking to private landowners within the Ballaugh Curraghs about the management plan and landowner concerns. MNH would like to advertise the work through social media and the papers and put a presentation on in Ramsey. The Ecosystem Policy Team asked to be involved with this to ensure they know what is going on. Due to GDPR the Ecosystem Policy Team could not give MNH the contact details for landowners in the Ramsar Site but they offered to write to them on their behalf.

There used to be a Ballaugh Curraghs Action for Wildlife Group which were working towards a conservation plan for the area, and Andree Dubbeldam from the MWT drafted something, and this was sent to MNH for consideration. MNH talked in the past about fencing off areas to exclude wallabies and undertaking restoration work but this has also now gone quiet. This work was passed to ES when she joined MNH and it is her intention to get input from all the interested groups before putting the plan out for public consultation. DEFA officers asked that they were given the opportunity to input prior to the management plan going out for public consultation.

2. ES and AT to seek clarification from MNH and DEFA about the Savills land reviews, how these connect with each other and the Curraghs management plan.
3. Ballaugh Curraghs Management Plan to be put on the agenda for the next BDG meeting and ES to circulate the draft plan to the group by the end of September.

On a related note NM was engaged by Howard Caine to speak about the wallabies for a podcast and he was very blunt in his assessment of them. The Manx Wildlife Trust confirmed that they had also been interviewed recently.

Action 4 - HC to speak to LM and DEFA about Wildlife Sites and mapping – this action is ongoing. HC is making good progress towards the creation of environmental constraints mapping for Manx Utilities (MU), it is proving quite a complicated process though. The big hope is that they will soon be able to start developing management plans for their land. They have already been talking with Sarah Hickey from the MWT about the peatlands work and DEFA and the Climate Change Team and they are very keen to join the dots between catchment management, compensation flows, water conservation, and their climate change duties and hope to work more with everyone in the future. AT reported that a meeting is being set up with DEFA officers to collaborate over catchment management.

22.19 Delivery Plan for 2022/23 –

(a) Consideration of the Delivery Plan showing all tasks submitted (Paper B), prior to posting the Plan on the DEFA website. (Aline Thomas)

All the BDG members have now reviewed and inputted their tasks for the year and this has been pulled together into the 2022/23 Delivery Plan.

4. All members to check the wording of their tasks within the plan by Monday 25th July, prior to its posting on the website.

Public bodies who need to meet their duties under the Climate Change Act will be looking for guidance on how to do this. Even awareness about who can provide this guidance is not available at the moment. ISO 14001 provides the standard for environmental management systems, HC is working on establishing this across the MUA, though some areas are more advanced than others. Other companies across the IoM will be working towards this also.

There is a lot of opportunity, through the implementation of Corporate Environmental Responsibility policies in IoM based companies, for the development of Manx carbon credits and carbon offsetting schemes, e.g. local tree planting schemes, rather than carbon offsetting in other countries. However, this is not available currently. The MU would love to receive advice about local initiatives and would like to work on land projects, but they would have to be in connection with and support the MUs remit, e.g. water supply.

5. MWT to meet up with HC and Kasia Woakes (Reservoirs and Water Officer MU) to have a conversation about local projects.

(b) Opportunity for discussion on any support required by members relating to submission of tasks / assistance required with delivery of tasks.

Two of MBL's tasks in the 2022/23 Delivery Plan - to review the birdwatchers and photographers codes of conduct, and to review Schedule 1 and 2 of the Wildlife Act have been done but they need to send these reviews, which essentially contain MBL recommendations, to DEFA for consideration.

The Ecosystem Policy Team are looking to create a double-sided guide on birds and bats in buildings for use by the DoI and anyone else doing work on and demolition of buildings. The guide will include information on what birds are likely to be present, what they look like, where they will nest, where bats will roost, timescales for nesting and roosting and who to contact should birds and bats be found. The Ecosystem Policy Team will engage with MBL and the MWT in the autumn in order to create this.

The Ecosystem Policy Team have also created biodiversity guidance for planning applications and hope to have this on their webpages soon.

22.20 Update on the Biodiversity Action Plan leaders meeting (Aline Thomas).

This meeting has been delayed until the 8th August, there are around 10 BAPs nearly finalised.

22.21 Update on the Manx Nature Conservation Forum (Aline Thomas).

The June meeting was postponed due to Covid and will be rescheduled for some time in August. KPMG and the Chamber of Commerce are very keen to talk to and create links with environmental organisations about collaborative projects, funding and climate change, and the Ecosystem Policy Team are looking to invite them to speak at the next MNCF meeting.

22.22 Any other business

Wallabies

The MWT are undertaking investigations into the IoM wallaby population in order to get more information to inform the divisive debate about them. This includes DNA analysis to find out what they are eating and how genetically diverse they are (how inbred) and thermal imaging drone counts in the autumn to do hotspot counts, to get a better idea of how many there are in the Curraghs.

There was a view expressed on how useful this would be and whether it was just creating further delay to taking action and wasting money on an obviously non-native species, when this money could be spent on researching natives, or actually putting money and effort into getting the Ramsar site into the condition it was when designated, or even enhancing it. It was felt that any results that come back would likely be subjective rather than empirical, allowing for a continuation of the debate.

However, the importance of evidence to back up a stance or a political decision was highlighted.

Manx Game Preservation Society

The group spoke about how to fill the space on the group now that Alan Jackson has stepped down as the representative of the Manx Game Preservation Society. AT confirmed that the Society have been

invited, via Alan, to send another representative. When the BDG was set up, the MNFU were invited to join but they declined because they could not have more than 1 representative and it didn't fit in with their constitution. It was felt important to get someone from the farming community on the BDG as farmers are collectively the Island's major landowners.

6. AT to speak to AL about him sending another member of his team along to meetings if he can't attend so that agriculture and the DEFA estate is represented.

22.23 Dates of next meetings: 31st October, 30th January 2023 & 27th March 2023

The meeting ended at 14:36

Signed: J. Ledwith [Chair]

Date: 2/11/2022