



Minutes of the 8th meeting of the Biodiversity Delivery Group
held on Monday 31st October 2022 at 2pm
in the Training Room, Department of Environment, Food & Agriculture,
The Slieau Whallian, St Johns

Present:

Jan Gledhill – Independent Chair	(JG)
Aline Thomas – Senior Biodiversity Officer, DEFA	(AT)
Richard Selman – Ecosystem Policy Manager, DEFA	(RS)
Andrew Lees - Director of Agriculture and Lands, DEFA	(AL)
Hannah Cawkwell – Environmental Officer, Manx Utilities (MU)	(HC)
Leigh Morris – CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust	(LM)
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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22.24 Apologies

Ken Milne and Neil Morris.

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

ACTION 1. SC to make a change to the wording of the 2nd paragraph in item 22.22 and then send the minutes to JG for signing.

22.26 Actions and matters arising from the February meeting

Action 1 - ES to get an update on the Curraghs Management plan and feedback to the BDG - unfortunately ES has not yet heard back from the MNH Senior Management Team and therefore can't bring the Plan to the BDG for comment or secure any funding for the proposed hydrology survey. LM has a meeting with the MNH Senior Management Team on the 16th December and the Curraghs is on the list.

Action 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 - MNH recently commissioned Savills to undertake an independent survey of their properties and assets, with the purpose of increasing evidence for additional Government funding or new income streams. This review included mainly the buildings but some landholdings, including the Calf of Man, but it didn't include the Ballaugh Curragh. Savills was also recently commissioned by the Agriculture and Lands Directorate of DEFA to undertake a review of the Curraghs Wildlife Park. However, the nature trail area, which is also part of the Ballaugh Curraghs ASSI and Ramsar site, only formed a very small part of this.

The next tri-annual report to the Ramsar Convention is due 2024. The main threat to the Ballaugh Curragh Ramsar Site was thought to be natural vegetation succession. It was agreed that it would be positive if a Management Plan could be finalised by then.

ACTION: 2. ES to provide an update on the Curraghs Management Plan as soon as she is able to.

Action 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 – see above updated from ES.

ACTION: 3. Ballaugh Curragh management plan to be put on the agenda once ES has received feedback from MNH Senior Management Team.

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

Action 5 - MWT to meet up with HC and Kasia Woakes (Reservoirs and Water Officer at MU) to have a conversation about local projects – complete. The meeting included a discussion about how MU and MWT can support each other, including how the MU can tap into MWT expertise and find out what they have on their land, which could be used to come up with a management plan to protect and enhance it.

Action 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 – complete.

22.27 Delivery Plan for 2022/23 – half yearly reporting by members on completed actions and any issues or potential collaborations

Manx Wildlife Trust

Biodiversity Strategy (BS) action 9f – The flora records have now been added onto the Recorder database.

ACTION 4: Change the status of task 9f to green

BS action 9c – The database manager role has been advertised and they have had 8 applicants. The MWT is to appoint the role very shortly.

Manx Utilities

BS action 39B – This action, for the implementation of the Environmental Management System to work towards meeting ISO 14001 (the international standard for environment management systems), is progressing well. They are currently mapping out their activities, how these impact upon the environment and how significant these impacts are. They will then look at the activities with significant impacts to see how these can be reduced, and look to highlight the positive ones.

The objective at the moment is to get the system up and running. The cherry on top will be to get the official certification. The biggest challenge is engagement, with some areas more receptive than others. Once running it will be the responsibility of the different areas to own and manage their sections of the system, so another challenge is making it simple enough to enable people to feed into it effectively.

The main objective of the system is to improve environmental performance, which is driven by legislation, but as biodiversity is part of the Climate Change Act, it will need to be considered.

MNH

BS action 7f – The Cregneash tenancy is not yet fully finalised because they are looking to take out some fields, but MNH need to have more conversations about this.

DEFA Ecosystem Policy Team

BS action 3a – Convention on Biological Diversity COP 15 is now scheduled for December 2022, after which the Ecosystem Policy Team will consider whether changes to the Biodiversity Strategy are required.

BS action 4a – Initial meetings have been held in DEFA. RS is due to meet with the DEFA CEO Ste Stanley soon to discuss goal setting in relation to the Island Plan and then there will be follow-up meetings.

BS action 4b – The Ecosystem Policy Team are encouraging Manx Nature Conservation Forum members to report further actions they are undertaking which contribute towards the delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy.

KPMG presented on Environmental Social Governance (ESG) at the last MNCF meeting (see Item 22.29 below).

BS action 4c – The next Environmental Educators meeting is scheduled for the 30th November.

BS action 5a – not started.

ACTION 5: Ecosystem Policy Team to submit a paper to the next BDG meeting to compare what climate change duties are in our Wildlife Act and Climate Change Act, compared to duties under Welsh legislation, and for consideration about whether the action for a more robust duty has been achieved.

BS action 10d – The Ballaugh Curraghs lichen survey has now been undertaken but the Ecosystem Policy Team have not yet received the report. This will feed into the Ballaugh Curraghs Management Plan.

BS action 17d – Discussions regarding management agreements are ongoing with a few of the landowners and tenants.

BS action 17e – Curragh Pharrick ASSI designation has now been confirmed. Douglas Head ASSI has recently been designated for its waxcap grassland importance, it is currently in the statutory consultation phase.

DEFA Agriculture and Lands

BS action 14h – This is in process – change status to amber.

BS action 27a – Action to be re-worded to say 'set up a system' to record Loaghtan sheep numbers, to make it clear that this action doesn't need further attention and therefore can be given a blue status.

BS action 32g – Action to be re-worded to say 'set up a system' to monitor catchment management on farms, to make it clear that this action doesn't need further attention and therefore can be given a blue status.

AT asked if the Ecosystem Policy Team could be sent an annual report on how much land is covered by catchment management plans. AL said that hypothetically yes. However, it is not available at the moment and they will need to set-up something so it is staff and time dependant. This could then form the basis for setting specific targets.

BS action 9l – complete, change status to blue.

Other actions noted by JG

BS action 10e – The IoM Plants of Conservation Concern has now been published – change status to blue.

BS action 10j – this action can be left green as it is ongoing. The blue carbon team are working with Government Technology Services at the moment to create a public map containing marine habitats.

BS action 11c- change status to green.

BS action 14n – The farmland birds calendar has now been published – change status to green.

BS action 15a – change status to green.

BS action 15f – Although JG did work with A-level students it was considered that this was covered by action 15d, and therefore 15f had not been progressed.

BS action 15h – MWT have now set up a fledgling eastern community group which will cover Onchan Wetlands.

BS action 15j – AT said that she believes Manx BirdLife had now employed a new Education Officer.

BS action 17h – DEFA, MWT and GTS are working together to create a website and web form, which will allow the public to add in areas of their land to a database of Isle of Man Wildling Areas (areas of land being managed for wildlife). When added on, the land will be scored based on the answers given on the web form, and if they score highly enough they will be included in the dashboard of figures for the Nature Recovery Network.

It was clarified that ongoing actions which are being achieved should stay in green. A blue RAGB status is only given to actions that are a one-off and therefore can be taken off the list as complete.

22.28 Update on the Biodiversity Action Plan leaders meeting held on 8th August and any key points from the meeting held on the morning of 31st October (Aline Thomas).

The October meeting mainly focussed on the adoption of a priority habitats list for the Isle of Man - whether to adapt the UKs list or follow the list created by David Bellamy from the Manx Wildlife Trust - as well as whether to adopt the UK Habitat Classification System (UK Hab), which is linked to biodiversity net gain metrics. There is to be another meeting scheduled for a few weeks' time to discuss this in more depth.

In regards to the Biodiversity Actions Plans, there are around 8 or 9 ready to be taken to the Wildlife Committee for final sign-off. The next BAP meeting is in January.

22.29 Update on the Manx Nature Conservation Forum held on the 22nd September (Aline Thomas).

The main topic was a presentation by KPMG on ESG. As part of this they are setting up a website to match up companies with charities and environmental projects that need funding. The purpose of presenting to the MNCF was not to get them involved in any type of management of the website, it was more to get them thinking about projects that could go on the website. However, the website will need some form of professional scrutiny, so perhaps there is a role for MNCF members in this.

KPMG and the National Oceanographic Centre (NOC) are currently bidding for funding from the National Environment Research Council (NERC) for a combined finance and biodiversity credits scheme, with the aim of creating a bio-credits system for a small jurisdiction which creates collaborations between finance stakeholders and biodiversity projects.

22.30 Any other business

Net gain workshop

Steve Butler, a Senior Planning Officer who has been seconded into the Government's Built Environment Reform Programme, and SC are Planning on holding a biodiversity net gain workshop at

the beginning of December, with a variety of interested parties. The aim is to consider how net gain could be brought in on the Isle of Man, what we can crib from the UK and what do we need to develop ourselves. Additionally, an ecologist from Cornwall Environmental Consultants is going to attend and give a quick presentation on their experience with net gain, what works and what doesn't so the Isle of Man can learn from the UK's experience. Steve was not intending on inviting any developers, but the feeling was that a couple of people from Hartford Homes should be invited because they are very interested, are already implanting net gain on their development projects and are therefore at the forefront.

5. SC to connect Leigh Morris with Steve Butler in regards to the net-gain workshop.

Action for Wildlife Website

The MWT have created the webpages and content and they are available on the MWT website but they haven't been officially launched yet.

22.23 Dates of next meetings: 30th January 2023 & 27th March 2023

The meeting ended at 15:32hrs.

Signed: J. Hedderley [Chair]

Date: 30 / 1 / 2023

