



## AGREED MINUTE

Meeting of  
Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership

26<sup>th</sup> February 2015  
Biosphere Office, Kirroughtree, Stronord, Newton Stewart

---

Present: Alison Steel, Mary-Ann Smyth, Chris Rollie, Cllr Alistair Geddes, Keith Muir, Andrew Bielinski, Annique Armstrong, Chris Miles, Peter Ross, Joseph Murphy, John Thomson and Mark Gibson

In Attendance: Alan Edgar, Nic Coombey, Chimwemwe Chagunda, Stephanie Miles, Ed Forrest, Simon Fieldhouse and Joan Mitchell (Chair)

Apologies: Cllr John McDowall, Howard Wilkinson, Cllr Robert McDill, Anne Connick, Peter Mason, Teresa Dougall, Christine Cuthbertson and Chris Savage.

---

### **Item 1 – welcome and apologies for absence**

The Chair, Joan Mitchell, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr John McDowall, Howard Wilkinson, Cllr Robert McDill, Anne Connick, Peter Mason, Teresa Dougall, Christine Cuthbertson and Chris Savage.

### **Item 2 – Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minute of the AGM held on 27 November 2014 were agreed as an accurate record of that meeting. The following matters were discussed under matters arising:-

Action Point 1 (Promotional materials and temporary displays) Nic Coombey advised that two requests have been received for temporary displays. The existing display at Mill On The Fleet requires to be updated with the rebranded pop-up boards. Board members were reminded to forward suggestions for temporary displays to Nic.

#### **Action Point 1:**

Update Mill On The Fleet display and supply temporary display materials to those who have requested them.

**By: Nic Coombey**

#### **Action Point 2:**

Identify possible locations and events for temporary displays promoting the Biosphere and forward suggestions to Nic Coombey

**By: All Board Members**

It was noted by the Chair that Action Points 2 and 3 (organisational and funding arrangements) are covered by items on the main agenda. With regard to Action Point 4 (dates for future meetings) theses have been circulated. Action Points 5, 6, 8 and 11 (Year of Food & Drink, Sense of Place, Charter and signage strategy) will be covered in the Biosphere Officers' reports under item 5 of the main agenda. With regard to Action Point 7 (natural Heritage Workshop), it was noted that a date has not been set and this will be arranged soon. With regard to Action Point 9 (Operational Plan) an updated version of the Plan with some financial information has been circulated. The project costs

are provisional and will be firmed up as projects move towards implementation. In regard to Action Point 10 (use of logo) it was noted that Newton Stewart Walking Festival group have adopted the Biosphere Logo. All Board Members were urged to consider adding the logo to their websites and promotional materials when appropriate. With regard to Action Point 12 (assessment framework for partnering requests) it was noted that this action was remitted to the Communications Technical Support Group however no progress has been made due to other commitments. Action Point 13 (Urdaibai Biosphere) will be covered under agenda item 7. Action Point 14 and 15 (partnership with ASSIST Social Capital) it was noted that ASSIST were invited to attend today's meeting but were unable to due to prior commitments. ASSIST will be invited to the May Partnership Board meeting. Under Action Point 16 (Climate Change and Adaptation Theme Group) it was noted that the Theme Group is established and has met twice since November. A climate change "Vision" will be launched at the end of March. Action Point 17 sought the establishment of a Socio-Economic Baseline Thematic Group to develop a set of baseline indicators. No progress has been made in establishing the group and the action point was continued. In regard to Action Point 18 (Galloway Forest Restocking Plan), Chris Rollie advised that he has met with Colin Hossack of Galloway Forest District and provided input. Finally, with regard to Action Point 19 (FCS restocking GIS information) Stephanie Miles advised that the information has been received and incorporated into the habitat network mapping.

**Action Point 3**

Arrange workshop examining natural heritage priorities and eco-system services approach.

**By: Ed and Stephanie**

**Action Point 4**

All partners are reminded to consider using the logo where appropriate on websites and promotional materials and in accordance with the Branding Guidelines.

**By: All**

**Action Point 5**

Invite ASSist Social Capital to May Partnership Board Meeting to provide presentation on links between the Biosphere and opportunities for social enterprise.

**By: Simon**

**Action Point 6**

Establish Thematic Group to develop socio-economic baseline report for monitoring purposes. Volunteers are sought.

**By: All**

**Item 3 - Financial Report For Biosphere Officers Project**

Ed Forrest presented an interim financial report on behalf of Southern Uplands Partnership. The meeting noted the underspend so far in Year 1 on projects. Ed explained the underspend is due to the time needed for the Officers to establish themselves in their new roles, to develop contacts and to identify potential projects. Spending on projects is anticipated to increase in the latter quarter of Year 1 and in subsequent years.

Ed also drew the Board's attention to the fact that SUP's expenditure on managing the project is projected to exceed the budget allocation for Year 1.

It was noted that any underspend in one year can be carried over to subsequent years and that the amounts allocated to individual projects are contingencies and will be firmed up once projects are more precisely defined.

**Action Point 7**

Present year end, financial report for Biosphere Officers Project to May Board meeting.

**By: SUP**

**Item 4 – Information Notes For Organisational Structure and Biosphere Officer Projects**

The Chair introduced the two information notes and invited comments on these. With regard to the “Organisational Structure and Internal Communications” note, there was agreement that the notes adequately explain how the organisation works and who Board members should contact to discuss different aspects of the Partnership’s work. It was agreed that further information is required on the Thematic Groups and the Technical Support Groups and a template should be produced which details who is on each group, the schedule of meetings, outcomes and who to contact. The templates should be added to the website under “What We Do”.

Ed Forrest presented the “Funding and Administration of Biosphere officer Project” information note. There followed a discussion on whether the arrangements for financial scrutiny and Board direction are sufficient. It was noted that the Funders’ Steering Group have overall responsibility for the financial management and SUP provide an annual financial report. The Chair of the Partnership Board is invited to attend the quarterly Funders’ Steering Group meetings and quarterly updates on work progress are provided at the Partnership Board meetings. At a more strategic level, the Board have approved the Action Plan which guides the officers’ work programme. It was agreed that a clearer quarterly report format be adopted for the Biosphere Officer quarterly updates which compare activities and progress with the items listed in the approved Action Plan. A red, amber, green “traffic light” system should be adopted as a quick visual on progress towards achieving actions.

There then followed a discussion on the merits of greater public access to the work of the Board and the means by which this could be achieved. There was general agreement that there should be greater public awareness of the Biosphere Boards’ activities. The options discussed for achieving this included:-

- a regular “public slot” during Board meetings to allow invited organisations to make presentations and observe the Board meeting;
- public open days at which the Board could present its activities to the general public;

It was agreed:-

1. Board members should promote the Biosphere at other events they are involved in;
2. To give consideration to occasional public meetings to explain to the public what the Biosphere is about;
3. To list the names of the Board Trustees on the website.
4. To use the submitted information notes as the basis of explaining the organisational structure of the Partnership.

**Action Points 8, 9, 10 & 11**

**8.** Adopted a revised report format for the quarterly Biosphere Officer Reports which includes a red, amber, green traffic light graphic indicator of progress.

**By: SUP and Biosphere Officers in consultation with secretary**

**9.** Board members should promote the Biosphere at other events/organisations they are involved in;

**By: All**

**10.** To give consideration to occasional public meetings to explain to the public what the Biosphere is about;

**By: All**

**11.** To list the names of the Board Trustees on the website.

**By: Nic**

### **Item 5 – Biosphere Officer Progress Reports**

The Chair introduced the quarterly updates by the Biosphere Officers and invited any questions or comments.

#### Natural Heritage

Under “Ecosystem Services” topic it was noted that a workshop is to be arranged to explore the concept of the ecosystem services approach. It was discussed that it is important that all of the Board understand the concept and that there has been a discussion on the merits of the approach in comparison to alternatives such as “re-wilding”. This internal debate needs to take place before the Partnership seeks to engage with land managers and the general public.

Stephanie circulated a questionnaire for Partners to complete and return to assist her in understanding the opinions of the wider Board membership on natural heritage issues. It was the opinion of the meeting that the Partnership needs to move quickly on this issue.

It was agreed that a workshop should be held on the afternoon of the May Board Meeting. It was noted that this will be the first in a series of such workshops to explore the topic. It was further discussed and agreed (under the Communities and Learning topic) that the Sense of Place Toolkit should form part of the discussion on Natural Heritage.

#### **Action Points 12 and 13**

**12.** Arrange Natural Heritage and Eco-system Services Workshop, which includes consideration of the role of Sense of Place Toolkit, for May Board meeting

**By: Ed Forrest**

**13.** Complete Natural Heritage questionnaire and return to Stephanie Miles by **20 March 2015**

**By: All Board Members**

#### Business & Development

The progress on the various matters was noted. It was agreed that there should be a Sense of Place workshop held after a future Board meeting to explain the kit to members and encourage uptake/contributions.

#### **Action Point 14**

Organise Sense of Place workshop for afternoon of a future Board meeting.

**By: Ed**

#### Community and Learning

The meeting considered the additional report circulated on the signage strategy. Following discussion of the merits of the three options it was agreed that the Community Signs is the most

appropriate approach and should be linked to signing of the Charter by the community concerned. A consistent tag line such as “A Village In The Biosphere” will need to be developed.

Alison Steel advised that she has joined the Education Theme Group and is exploring what other Biospheres have done in education.

**Action Point 15**

Take forward community based signage strategy .

**By: Nic**

**Item 6 – e-newsletter**

The Chair presented a paper on the merits of a newsletter for the Biosphere Partnership and the different formats that the newsletter could be produced in. Following a discussion it was agreed to remit the issue to the Communications Technical Group. It was further agreed that the newsletter should:-

- Be targeted at a wider public audience
- Be linked to information on the website as a means of directing people towards the website
- Be produced in a resource efficient manner
- Be produced quarterly (to begin with)

Initial distribution is likely to be by means of our existing list of contacts. Board Members are encouraged to email links to their own contacts as a means of spreading coverage. A button should be created on the webpage which allows anyone to sign up to receive the newsletter.

**Action Point 16**

Produce detailed proposals for production of an e-newsletter and agreement by the Board

**By: Communications Technical Group**

**Item 7 – Urdaibai Biosphere Partnering Request**

Simon Fieldhouse provided a verbal update on progress regarding Urdaibai Biopshere’s request for a partnering arrangement with GSAB. An exchange of letters has taken place and Urdaibai’s Board are meeting in March to consider whether to progress with an agreement. A response is awaited.

**Action Point 17**

Report any further communication following Urdaibai Biopshere Board’s consideration of the exchange of letters.

**By: Simon Fieldhouse**

**Item 8 – Strategic Projects**

Following consideration of the paper it was agreed that a central compendium of major projects, maintained on the website would be helpful. There will need to be some experimenting with what constitutes a strategic project and is therefore included on the list. Alan Edgar agreed to act as coordinator and Board Members are requested to send brief details of any projects that are of more than local significance they are aware of to Alan.

**Action Point 18**

Send details of “strategic” projects (projects of more than local significance) to Alan Edgar ([alan.edgar@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.edgar@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)) and upload to new page on website.

**By: All/Alan Edgar**

**Item 9 – Preliminary Draft Man and the Biosphere Strategy**

Following consideration of the paper the meeting broadly welcomed the revised strategy and the change in name from “Biosphere Reserve” to “Biosphere Region”, and noted the following.

- it is a framework and not every biosphere will need to achieve every action
- ecosystem restoration is not in the MAB’s main objectives
- the strategy recognises the importance of not separating people from environmental objectives and seeks to harmonise interactions between people and nature.
- strong emphasis on knowledge exchange
- strong emphasis on thematic working

**Item 10 – AOCB**

Chimwemwe noted that only one Board member has submitted a mini-biography for inclusion on the website. The meeting agreed that adding biographies is important as it encourages other interested parties to interact with the organisation.

**Action Point 19**

Supply short biography to Chimwemwe ([chimwemwe@sup.org.uk](mailto:chimwemwe@sup.org.uk)) for publication on the Website

**By: All Board Members**

**Item 11- Date of Next Meeting**

29 May 2015 (at a venue in East Ayrshire)

**End of Meeting**

Minute Prepared by Alan Edgar ([alan.edgar@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.edgar@east-ayrshire.gov.uk))