

Agreed Minute  
Meeting of  
Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Partnership  
May 2015  
Cumnock Town Hall, Cumnock, East Ayrshire

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**Present:** Joan Mitchell (Chair), Chris Miles, Joseph Murphy, Keith Muir, J Mark Gibson, Howard Wilkinson, Maggie Gordon, Cllr Robert McDill, Chris Rollie, John Thomson, Andrew Bielinski, Anne Connick & Peter Ross

**Apologies:** Chris Savage, Christine Cuthbertson, Annique Armstrong, Alison Steel, Peter Mason, Gordon Mann, Gillian Arnot, Mary-Anny Smyth, Cllr Alistair Geddes, John Smith & Peter Brown.

**In attendance:** Alan Edgar, Nic Coombey, Simon Fieldhouse, Wendy Fenton, Emily Taylor, Ed Forrest & John Esslemont

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**Item 1 – welcome and apologies**

Joan welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Peter Mason, Cllr Alistair Geddes, Cllr John McDowall, Mary-Ann-Smyth, Chris Savage, Annique Armstrong, Christine Cuthbertson and Alison Steel

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**Item 2 - Approval of Minute of Previous Meeting & Matters Arising**

The minute of the 26 Feb 2015 meeting was agreed as an accurate record. The following items were discussed under matters arising:-

**Promotional Posters** (*Action Points 1 & 2 of previous minute*) Noted that a new information poster is now available which can be used for temporary display. All members are encouraged to think of locations where the poster could be displayed, including within their own organisation's premises, and to contact Nic to obtain copies. The poster is available in standard sizes, up to A1.

<p><b>Action Point 1:-</b> Request copies of Biosphere Information Poster from Nic and arrange for display <b>By:</b> All</p>
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**Permanent Display Panels** (*Action Point 2 of previous minute*) The Partnership are aiming to install ten permanent display panels around the Biosphere this summer. The priority is to identify existing permanent display panels which can be rebranded using Biosphere information. Members are asked to forward suggested locations to Nic as a matter of urgency. The total cost of installing a new, free standing, display board is circa £1k and there is an allocation within the Biosphere Officer Project budget for this form of promotion.

<p><b>Action Point 2:-</b> Forward suggestions for locations for permanent display panels, including existing panels that can be rebranded to Nic <b>By:</b> All</p>
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**Use of Logo** (*Action Point 4 of previous minute*) Members are reminded to use the Biosphere logo on their own promotional material and websites. Noted that SNH have already done so. Howard advised that Ayrshire Food Network will add the logo to their website. It was also noted that 25 people have signed the charter and a list of their names will appear on the website. It was agreed that people and organisations based outside of the Biosphere are encouraged to sign the charter but cannot use the logo.

**Action Point 3:-** Consider opportunities to add the Biosphere logo to partner organisation websites  
**By:-** All

**Presentation by ASSist Social Capital** (*Action Point 5 of previous minute*) It was agreed to invite ASSist to provide a presentation at the August meeting.

**Socio-Economic Baseline Theme Group** (*Action Point 6 of previous minute*) One, initial, meeting has taken place. It was noted that the James Hutton Institute have undertaken similar baseline studies for both Ayrshire LEADER and Dumfries & Galloway LEADER and the information is available at Postcode Sector level. It was agreed that the Business & Development Officer should examine whether the data provided for LEADER can be utilised for the Biosphere.

**Action Point 4:-** Business and Development Officer to contact the two LEADER coordinators to explore whether the information gathered by James Hutton Institute can be made available and would be suitable for the Biosphere Socio/Economic Baseline Study.

**Promotion of Biosphere By Board Members Within Their Own Organisations and At Public Meetings** (*Action Points 9 and 10 of previous minute*) Noted that Glentroll Community Association have organised meetings to discuss the. It was agreed that a sample presentation should be prepared for Board Members to use and adapt for meetings. A Powerpoint presentation should be added to the website with slides containing key messages.

**Action Point 5:-** Prepare Powerpoint presentation with key messages and upload to website.  
**By:-** Nic

**List of Board Members On Website** (*Action Point 11 of previous minute*):- list requires to be updated.

**Action Point 6:-** update list of Biosphere Partnership Members on website.  
**By:-** Nic

**Natural Heritage Questionnaire** (*Action Point 13 of previous minute*) Noted that the questionnaire was to be completed by all Board Members are returned to the Natural Heritage Officer by 20 March 2015. Agreed an update will be provided at a future meeting.

**Action Point 7:-** collate responses to Natural Heritage Questionnaire and report back to Board  
**By:-** Natural Heritage Officer

**Sense of Place Workshop** (*Action Point 14 of previous minute*) Agreed workshop will take place on the afternoon of the August meeting of the Partnership.

**Action Point 8:-** Organise Sense of Place Toolkit Workshop for afternoon of August Board Meeting  
**By:-** Communications Technical Support Group

**Community Based Signage Strategy :-** (*Action Point 15 of previous minute*) It was agreed that Nic will approach community councils to encourage sign-up to the Charter and possible installation of signage. Those community councils who have already shown an interest in the Biosphere should be prioritised.

**Action Point 9:-** Approach Community Councils to encourage sign-up to Charter and discuss signage.  
**By:-** Nic

**Biosphere Partnership Newsletter:-** (*Action Point 16 of previous minute*). Noted that newsletter is being produced bi-monthly and a “button” has been added to the website to enable easy sign-up to the newsletter. The Chair wishes each Board Member to take a turn at writing an introduction to the newsletter each issue and asked Nic to approach a different Board Members each issue to request a short article.

**Action Point 10:-** Each Board Member to be asked to prepare a short introduction for an issue of the Newsletter on a rotating basis.  
**By:-** Nic

**Urdaibai Biosphere Partnering Request:-** (*Action Point 17 of previous minute*). Simon provided an update and it was advised that a return visit to Urdaibai is planned for September this year. Five Board Members will have the opportunity to take part in the visit.

**Action Point 11:-** organise Board visit to Urdaibai Biosphere involving members of the Board and other parties who the Board wish to work with (businesses, organisations, individuals). Explore possible sources of funding including LEADER “Learning Journey” funding stream.  
**By:-** Simon Fieldhouse

**Strategic Project List:-** (*action point 18 of previous minute*) Noted that no suggestions for projects have been forwarded. Members encouraged to forward details of relevant projects to Alan Edgar for inclusion on website.

**Action Point 12:-** send details of “strategic” projects of wider than local significance to Alan Edgar ([alan.edgar@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.edgar@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)).  
**By:-** All

### **ITEM 3 – Year End Financial Report Biosphere Officers Project**

The meeting noted the financial report, prepared by Southern Uplands Partnership, for the “arms length” Biosphere Officer Project and the following issues were highlighted:-

- I) Lack of spend on Capital Projects in Year 1
- II) Addition time contributed by SUP to manage staff

It was noted that the capital spend is forecast to increase over Year 2 and Year 3 of the project. It was agreed that SUP should be reimbursed for their additional expenditure incurred on staff management, out of the existing Biosphere Officer Project budget.

#### **ITEM 5 – Biosphere Coordinator Role**

Item 5 was taken ahead of Item 4 as Simon Fieldhouse had another appointment later in the morning. Simon presented a paper on the coordinator role, explaining that the role is currently split between officers from Dumfries & Galloway Council, East Ayrshire Council and Southern Uplands Partnership. The division of responsibility and existing workloads means that it is not always possible to respond to inquiries effectively. The Board were asked to consider the possibility of a permanent coordinator role as a legacy of the current Biosphere Officer Project.

Possible means of funding such a permanent post were discussed including public funding by agencies and private funding such as the Lottery and trusts. It was noted that funding core posts is more difficult than funding capital projects.

There was unanimous agreement that a permanent coordinator post is essential. There was general agreement that a meeting should be held with the new Minister for the Environment to explain what GSAB is aiming to achieve and to present a well prepared case for funding for a coordinator.

**Action Point 12:-** Arrange meeting with the Minister for the Environment for the purposes of explaining the aims and objectives of GSAB and presenting a case for public funding for a permanent coordinator.

**By: Funders Steering Group**

#### **ITEM 4 – Biosphere Officer Reports**

The chair advised the meeting that there has been a change in personnel with regard to the Natural Heritage Officer post and introduced the two new officers, Emily and Wendy, who will be splitting the role between them. Reports were heard from the Communities & Learning Officer and Business and Development Officer.

##### Actions Arising

##### Communities and Learning Officer

**Action Point 13:-** submit articles and news items for the website to Nic

**By:-** all

**Action Point 14:-** Communications Technical Support Group to meet and identify next set of tasks and report to Board meeting in August.

**By:-** Communications Group

**Action Point 15:-** Arrange meeting of Education Theme Group to explore opportunities for further work with schools and possible joint initiatives with SRUC and Glasgow University.

**By:-** Nic

##### Business and Development Officer

**Action Point 16:-** Continue dialogue with Scottish Enterprise regarding trade marking of logo

**By:-** Chimwemwe

#### Natural Heritage Officers

**Action Point 17:-** develop habitats and species action plans and work with land managers to develop “on the ground” projects.

**By:-** Emily and Wendy

#### **ITEM 6 – Trustees Meeting Dates**

**Action Point 18:-** seek dates when Trustees are available to meet

**By:-** Alan

#### **ITEM 7 – Standing Item Members Proposals**

The chair introduced a new Standing Item for all future Board Meetings which provides the opportunity for any Member of the Board to present an item for discussion on any topic related to the Biosphere.

Joseph Murphy (Glasgow University) raised the issue of reintroduction of Eurasian Lynx within Scotland and advised that the Lynx UK Trust would be interested in meeting with the Partnership to explore views on reintroduction within the Biosphere.

After discussion, it was agreed that it would be premature to engage in discussion over one particular aspect of conservation. The Partnership is still at an early stage in developing its approach to conservation in the wider context of sustainable development. The Board agreed, therefore, that it would not be appropriate to engage with the Lynx UK Trust at this stage.

#### **ITEM 8 – Standing Item Partnerships and Networks**

**Action Point 19:-** Paper on the Estonia EUROMAB conference to be prepared for August meeting of the Partnership Board

**Action By:-** Simon

#### **ITEM 9 – AOCB**

##### Climate Ready Biosphere Action Plan

Final draft has been prepared, following the three workshops.

The Chair proposed that the Board agree the document and the motion was carried unanimously. It was further agreed that the cover picture be amended and the reference to Destination Dumfries & Galloway be removed.

**Action Point 20:-** arrange a formal launch of the Climate Ready Biosphere Action Plan

**By:-**

##### Hedge-laying Training

Mark Gibson advised that free training for six candidates is available in hedge-laying. Contact Mark with any suggestions for good candidates.

### LEADER Update

Peter Ross provided an update on the LEADER program. Volunteers are currently being sought to sit on the LAGs. Projects will be invited to start speaking to the coordinators in September to meet the January deadline for submission of applications.

### Scottish Power Grid Reinforcement Works Within Biosphere

Scottish Power's proposed plan for major upgrading and re-routing of overhead powerlines within the Biosphere were discussed. It was agreed that the project has significant implications for the Biosphere and that the Biosphere Partnership should seek to engage with SP to help facilitate public consultation.

**Action Point 21:-** issue letter to Scottish Power seeking further information and offering meeting with the Board.

**Action By:- Simon**

End of Meeting

Minute Prepared By:- Alan Edgar (Secretary)

Date:- 14 July 2015