

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Lowland Grassland and Heathland

Ecosystem Group Meeting

Berthlwyd Farm, National Trust

25th June 2015

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees

Helen Buckingham (Chair)	HB	NT
Jan Sherry	JS	NRW
Stuart Smith	SS	NRW
Dave Rogerson	DR	WG
Holly York	HY	WBP
Joe Daggett	JD	National Trust
Mike Howe	MH	National Trust
Jess Whitehead	JW	National Trust
Rebecca Price	RP	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA)
Bradley Welch	BW	BBNPA

Apologies

Arwel Williams	WG
Sarah Mellor	Pembrokeshire Coast NPA
Amy Vanstone	RSPB Cymru
Colin Cheesman	Plantlife
Caroline Wilson	Snowdonia
Sinead Lynch	Bumblebee Conservation
Liz Jones	NRW

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

HB extended a warm welcome to all attendees.

2. Minutes and actions from previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be published on the WBP website.

Action 1: WBP (HY) to upload the agreed November minutes to the WBP website

The majority of actions from June & November's meeting have now been completed, with the remaining outstanding actions either covered by agenda items or on-going. See below:

Carried forward from June:

Action 4. Address issues with heather and burning in Wales: JS to contact Davey Martyn/Caryn Le Roux to arrange meeting	HY to arrange with Tom Henderson (WG), JS & HB.
Action 5. Land management demonstration days – potential to link with Glastir Management days. JS to contact Arfon Griffiths to discuss	Consider funding sources for management days. Important to link to Pollinators. JS to follow up

Actions from November:

Action 6. Evidence Gaps: JS to write up EG on 'Independent review of habitat recreation'	In progress. JS to provide EG to group
Action 7. Priority Habitat Mapping: HY to assess activity taking place within Lowland Grassland and Heathland Priority Areas on BARS	In progress
Action 12. All Wales Chough Meeting – HY to arrange date and arrangements for meeting with AV/SM	Meeting currently being organised. Invitee list – ensure we cover inland populations, and all coastal area (Great Orme to Gower). HY to provide invitee list to HB, JS & SS.
Action 14. Non-native seed mixes: CC to discuss with Trevor Dines, Plantlife for an update on the progress and circulate policy when available	Colin Cheesman unable to attend today. HY to contact CC for update.

EIA Training sessions (action 8 June) – HB will follow up on training sessions for National Trust with DR for next autumn/spring

Hay Meadow Management (action 9 June) - Continue research into hay meadow management and restoration at Elan Valley. SS to contact Elan Valley to discuss potential follow up. Propose a case for long-term meadow survey, perhaps to NRW/WBP – not required at present. SS to circulate Conservation management of grassland in Elan Valley NRW report to group. HB suggested Elan Valley and Pumlumon as locations for the summer 2016 group field visit.

It would be useful to produce a page document on Hay Meadow Management Projects to pull together links to various projects and guidance. Term Hay meadow in the broadest sense (flower rich meadows).

Action 2: SS (via HY) circulate conservation management in Elan Valley report.

Action 3: HY/JS/HB/SS to look into summer 2016 field visit to Elan Valley and Pumlumon

Action 4: HB/SS/JS produce a page document on Hay Meadow Management with links to projects and guidance.

3. Restoration Workshop

Wales Biodiversity Strategy Board has established a Restoration Task & Finish group as part of the establishment of the Nature Recovery Plan. Prior to this, the WBP Chairs Group held a Restoration workshop. HB attended both.

- Aichi Target 15: restoration of at least 15% of degraded ecosystems
- WBP Chairs Group workshop focused on establishing what we mean by the term restoration
- WG need to provide a framework and give criteria for best practice.
- Restoration work is already taking place which is delivering multiple benefits. Focus of restoration to achieve targets –peatlands? Welsh Peat Action Group established last year, with a programme for favourable management by 2020, with ongoing restoration effort.
- WBSB Restoration T&F group led by Dai Harris & Steve Spode. The group met on the 2nd June. Workshops at the meeting focused on agreeing a common understanding on what we are trying to achieve for restoration, and looking at delivery mechanisms – defining and building on best practice.
- Can NRW provide maps of priority areas for restoration – NRW connecting networks & WBP Priority Areas? Important to ensure the Lowland Grassland & Heathland Priority area maps are up to date (<http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Lowland-Grassland-Heathland>).
- Next WBSB is on the 1st July.
- Review of re-creation? Lessons Learnt paper on pipelines in Snowdonia (Caroline Wilson preparing) would be useful

Action 5: Priority Areas - **ALL** send thoughts on potential updates, additions, etc. to JS

Action 6: HY to contact CW re lessons learnt paper on pipelines in Snowdonia paper

Action 7: HY to circulate Restoration workshop papers

4. Juniper (Jan Sherry, NRW)

As part of NRW work on plant health, surveys have been carried out on Junipers looking for signs of *Phytophthora* disease. The surveys found no sign of the disease in Junipers in Wales. Infected Juniper trees have been reported in England and Scotland. Scotland recently produced guidance on '[planting juniper in Scotland: reducing the risk from Phytophthora austrocedrae](#)'. The guidance uses a juniper programme strategy based on zones across Scotland. Zones are based on the juniper population size and conservation management level (e.g. planting) required. Junipers in Wales tend to be on upland and grassland habitats, unlike woodlands in Scotland. Wales requires a Juniper strategy to manage Juniper populations.

Discussion points:

- Any sign of disease – eradicate
- No planting near well-established populations to reduce risk of affecting larger numbers of individuals.
- Planting options – control plant sources
 - Use seed and grow (local providence).
 - Important to ensure any nursery's, even if using local providence seeds, are disease free (E.g. what else is being grown in the nursery)
- Surveillance of populations most likely to show infection, particularly public visited sites e.g. Snowdonia (3 peaks challenge poses risk), coastal populations, and those close to water sources (risk of movement).
- Identification training for local wardens?
- Plantlife have produced a Wales Juniper Inventory – potential to use as a baseline to assess vulnerability of populations and thus where management such as planting is required.
- Potential to link to Check, Clean & Dry campaign e.g. cleaning boots on 3 peaks challenge.

JS to keep group informed of Juniper developments when applicable.

5. AOB, Date & Location of next meeting: TBD

Action 8: HY to arrange date and location of next meeting with JS & HB

Site Visit: Group visit to Berthlwyd National Trust Farm, Brecon Beacons. Group joined by staff from National Trust, NRW local team and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

Berthlwyd is a very special farm with a range of rich and interesting habitats. It's the perfect place to consider and discuss issues of both grassland management and the farming of a complex, nature rich landscape. The farm also provides a great place to look at how we can monitor a range of habitats with reduced resources and how we can feed back results into the farming system. Group looked at various hay meadows and marshy grassland/fen meadow fields, with a focus on management and monitoring issues.

Our thanks to Joe Daggett and National Trust.



