

**Minutes of a meeting of the UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder Partnership Group (UBIOM SPG) held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 14:00 in the King Orry Room, Government Offices, Douglas**

**Present:**

Hon G Boot MHK	Environment Minister - Chair	GB
Mrs Karen McHarg	Director of Environment, DEFA	KM
Dr Richard Selman	Head of Ecosystem Policy, DEFA	RS
Miss Jo Overty	Biosphere Project Officer, DEFA	JO
Miss Breeshey Kermodé	Biosphere Project Assistant, DEFA	BK
Miss Jo Callister	Advisory Teacher for Manx Curriculum, DESC	JC
Mrs Muriel Garland	Chair, EcoVannin	MG
Dr Leigh Morris	CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust	LM
Mr Edmund Southworth	Director, Manx National Heritage	ES
Dr Breesha Maddrell	Director, Culture Vannin	BM
Mr Andy Cooper	Manx National Farmers Union	AC
Ms Gail Corrin	Higher Education Manager, UCM	GC
Mr Bill Dale BEM	Beach Buddies Isle of Man	BD
Mrs Angela Byrne	Head of Tourism, Visit Isle of Man	AB
Mr Adrian Cowin	Arbory Parish Commissioners	AC.
Miss Grainney Sheard	Isle of Man Arts Council	GS
Ms Jennifer Houghton	Institute of Directors IoM	JH
Mr Glen Geeves	Climate Change Team	GG
Ms Pam Teare	Cabinet Office Communications Team	PT

**Apologies:**

Hon H Quayle MHK	Chief Minister
Mark Edwards	CABO Communications
Mrs Marlene Maska MLC	Isle of Man Arts Council
Mrs Jane Corkill	Isle of Man Arts Council
Mrs Rebecca George	Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce
Miss Laura McCoy	Manx National Heritage
Dr Erica Spencer	Manx National Heritage
Mrs Viv Davies	Manx Wildlife Trust

**Item**

**Action**

**1. Minister's welcome and opening remarks**

GB gave a special welcome to the four new organisations on the group: the Institute of Directors' Isle of Man branch, Isle of Man Arts Council, Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce and Isle of Man Municipal Association. It was the last meeting to be attended by Edmund Southworth, Director of Manx National Heritage, prior to his retirement. The Minister thanked Edmund and his organisation as stalwart supporters of the Biosphere and wished him well.

2020 was a frustrating year in many respects for our Biosphere delivery, it had hoped to launch a new vision and strategy and website but encountered unavoidable delays. It had planned a warm Manx welcome for UK Man and the Biosphere Committee, as hosts of the biannual

meeting, only to have to dismantle arrangements. And it had to withdraw the invitation issued to the Secretary General of the UK National Commission for UNESCO to Tynwald Day when this was pared back.

Our Biosphere status is a binding agent, bringing together all strands of what is good about the Isle of Man under one umbrella. Biosphere officers reported unprecedented interest in recent months in contributing to our Biosphere, and to sustaining what we have for the future. They have pressed on through Covid with a programme of engagement for businesses and in education; grown the number of Partners by 70 and celebrated the work of Partners in the Island's response to the pandemic.

And the year ended with a personal success for the Project Officer, who gained an intensive qualification in Biosphere management, achieving 100% for her final assignment, handed in on 27th December. She is now one of only a few people in the world with a work-based qualification of any sort in Biosphere management.

2021 will be a significant year for UBIOM. Not only will its vision and strategy be published and its improved website go live, but it is also the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme and these milestones will encourage more people than ever to engage with, participate in and cherish our Biosphere.

Around the table, all have an important role to play, the Minister said, appealing to SPG to continue to promote the importance of Biosphere to the world, share its messages and actively support its initiatives.

**2. Meeting apologies**

As above.

**3. Conflicts of interest with items on the agenda**

None.

**4. Minutes of meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020 for approval**

No amendments. Minutes agreed and signed.

**5. Matters arising not featured elsewhere on agenda**

No comments noted.

**6. Vision and strategy – verbal update by Dr Richard Selman, Head of Ecosystem Policy Team, DEFA**

RS said that in 2019, SPG established the first ever local vision and strategy for delivery of UBIOM would be titled 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future' and that delivery would be under the five Es of economy, environment, education, enjoyment and engagement.

SPG saw and commented on the first iteration of the vision and strategy ahead of the SPG meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020. SPG changes to content and layout were discussed and agreed at that meeting.

We had hoped to have launched the strategy and accompanying revised website by now, but events prevented this, initially Covid-related issues but then challenges in the booking of designer time. In autumn, we went to a private designer, the same company who are designing the new website. A 'final' version of the strategy was circulated to SPG in early January 2021 for any final comments and we now have a final document.

We took the opportunity to refresh the logo, following feedback from marketers and to bring us into line with emerging technical guidelines from UNESCO, which state that the acronym 'UNESCO' cannot, in future, appear on local logos. While we have retained many of the features of our original logo, this change will benefit us as we will have more freedom to use the logo commercially. UBIOM received no comments back from SPG so trust it is content with the result. From the finalisation of the strategy, the website revamp and testing is expected to take around six weeks. UBIOM can then hold a launch event while other components such as show stands, etc. are designed and created. UBIOM has made a short video as part of the launch. Our Project Officer has also created an extensive cross community roll out plan with actions for different sectors including talks, webinars, meetings, multi-media etc. Normal workload permitting, she has begun to have meetings with SPG to seek help rolling it out in your own areas, which will be crucial. Our new vision and strategy and revamped website will go live in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme, which will be impactful.

The strategy will carry us forward to our next periodic review and really demonstrate our holistic approach to the Biosphere and our ambitions. In addition to existing schemes and projects, we can aim to directly deliver one project per 'E' per year.

- We feel the Nature Recovery Network we'll discuss shortly is a candidate for Environment for 2021.
- The business training pilot will serve our Economy
- The big event in schools (to be touched on in our Project Officer's report at item 7) would have been our flagship project for Education. Although not now actually happening until 2022, it will be launched in schools this September, so will be our Education project for this year and continuing into next year.
- The Biosphere Bee community picnic, also the subject of an update later, is an Enjoyment project.
- Suggestions for Engagement would be welcome.

The document was shown to the room and passed round. GB thanked the team for their efforts on the strategy and said it was engaging and colourful. BM said the document was visually beautiful. There were no further comments.

**7. General progress report – paper and verbal update by Jo Overty, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Project Officer**

**Staffing:** Breeshey Kermode started with UBIOM as Project Assistant in September, strengthening the team to two full-time officers and filling the gap left when Rowan Henthorn was seconded to the climate change team in July 2019. The Project Officer has successfully undertaken an intensive online qualification with UNESCO/University of Athens/other bodies on Managing Biospheres and will, in 2021, undertake training in video-making.

**Budget for 2020/21:** The budget agreed by DEFA for UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man in 2020/21 was £30,000. There may be an underspend due to a delay in progressing the new vision and strategy and accompanying website, for which there are up front and staged payments, but it is too early to report accurately. The payments will be made in 2021/22 if not in the current financial year, so there is no overall saving. As reported to you in June 2020, it is anticipated that the budget will be re-established at £50,000 in 2021/22.

**UNESCO attendance/involvement:** EuroMAB, the biennial conference of European and North American Biospheres, was due to be held in Austria in spring 2021 but has been put back to September 2021.

UBIOM is joining Dublin Bay and Kerry Biospheres in a three-way webinar series commencing in January 2021 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of MAB. Invitations to attend the webinars will be shared with SPG.

It is hoped an invitation to Tynwald Day 2021 can be extended to the Secretary-General of the UK National Commission for UNESCO, who was to have attended the 2020 Tynwald Day as an official guest until it was pared back.

The UBIOM Chair/Chief Minister wrote to members of Tynwald to ask them to promulgate UBIOM social media posts about the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of UNESCO in November 2020.

The autumn 2020 meeting of the UK and Ireland Man and the Biosphere Committee, due to have been held in Cambridgeshire Fens, a candidate Biosphere, was instead held online. The Isle of Man had been due to host the spring 2020 meeting, which was cancelled due to Covid, and will re-offer to host a meeting as soon as the Covid/borders situation is resolved, having last hosted in 2016. The Project Officer has taken on specific tasks for the UK and Ireland MAB committee: compiling a calendar of UNESCO and other related events/training globally that UK/Ireland Biospheres can benefit from and creating/running a private social media space for dialogue and ideas-sharing.

The Project Officer attended a webinar series in summer 2020 on

Biospheres' role in Covid recovery, delivered by UNESCO MAB headquarters. She also attended similar webinars delivered by the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves.

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man's 'Biosphere Badge' for Guides and the work of Beach Buddies featured in a report entitled 'The National Value of UNESCO to the UK' published by the UK Commissioner for UNESCO in July 2020. The report attracted international media coverage.

UBIOM is an active and valued participant in all UK National Commission for UNESCO initiatives and research.

**Awards:** The UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Awards, which celebrate good practice in the areas of education, environment, economic sustainability and energy, would usually have been launched in June 2020, with an entry deadline of August 2020. It was felt that the Covid situation would leave under-pressure organisations with little appetite for celebrating successes. Instead, UBIOM Partners were invited to submit images of their contributions to the Isle of Man's response to Covid and UBIOM released a video featuring these, with the UBIOM Vice-Chair/Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture praising their efforts. We publicised this and invited SPG member organisations to do the same. The 2021 awards will be remodelled around the Five Es of the new strategy but continue to feature energy, as the current awards grew from the former Department of Enterprise energy awards.

**Business:** Encouraging businesses to adopt sustainable practices was a major focus of UBIOM's work in 2020. University College Isle of Man (UCM) Business Entrepreneurship Masters student Nikole Cervantes undertook a 40-week placement with UBIOM. She interviewed Partners about how their involvement with Biosphere benefits them and what more UBIOM could do to support them in their drive to be more sustainable. Nikole/UBIOM established a series of webinars, including one delivered by KPMG's Global Head of Infrastructure/IMPACT Programme. A business breakfast for potential Partners and follow up drop-in sessions were held, hosted at Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce. A private Facebook space was created where businesses are sharing challenges and successes. The Biosphere Project Officer continues to deliver talks to boards, sustainability committees, individual company CEOs, etc. on request.

**Sustainability/circular economy training:** Continuing this work with businesses, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man is leading an initiative with the Department for Enterprise, UCM, Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce and One World Centre to upskill businesses regarding sustainability and the circular economy. Businesses were surveyed in November over the type and format of training they require and 26 responses were received. UBIOM and Partner organisations meet on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 to consider the responses and plan a pilot training programme to be delivered this year.

**Education:** A Biosphere Week, scheduled to be held in primary schools

in summer term 2021, and one of our flagship pieces of work for 2021, has been put back a year due to the current circumstances. Schools will be allocated an aspect of our Biosphere to celebrate any way they choose: written work, music, video, assemblies, exhibitions etc. Education has been another focus area in the second half of 2020. UBIOM has reconstituted, with Manx Wildlife Trust and Department for Education, Sport and Culture, an Environment Educators' Group to bring together all bodies delivering the same. This has met twice and is already leading to more collaborative working. UBIOM has created a directory of environment educators on its website.

Emma Sayle, UCM Masters in Business Entrepreneurship student, will undertake a 40-week placement with UBIOM from spring 2021 and she will continue the good work commenced by Nikole Cervantes, although the precise content of her project is still being discussed. UBIOM has input into a revision of the science curriculum at UCM. During Covid, UBIOM created and published bespoke home learning activities, linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to enable the Scout Association of the Isle of Man and Girlguiding Isle of Man to continue to work towards their Biosphere Badges. The organisations are now meeting again in person.

The Project Officer continues to deliver workshops and assemblies in schools and supports teachers with materials. She supported a class at Rushen School with a term-long project on our Biosphere. UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man continues to purchase Sustainable Development Goals Book Club titles for 33 primary schools. UN Publishing has so far published lists of books relating to 11 of the 17 Goals, from which DESC chooses one title for local distribution.

**Biodiversity:** A paper on plans for a Nature Recovery Network in collaboration with Manx Wildlife Trust is a separate agenda item. UBIOM is providing input to the Langness Partnership in its plans for 'Turning the Tide', an event on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Langness, Derbyhaven and Sandwick as an Area of Special Scientific Interest, that organisers are linking to Biosphere. During the summer UBIOM ran a Young Nature Blogger challenge in conjunction with Isle of Man Newspapers and Manx Wildlife Trust. Winning entries appeared in the IoM Examiner and MWT's Manx Nature magazine and the Vice-Chair and MWT presented MWT-supplied prizes, which attracted media coverage. It is planned to invite UK/Ireland Biospheres to run this in their Biospheres in summer 2021, with, perhaps, an overall UK/Ireland winner. An educational #MarineMonday series of articles on the Isle of Man's 10 Marine Nature Reserves started on UBIOM social channels and website on World Oceans Day in June 2020 and ran until September 2020. UBIOM also attends the Manx Nature Conservation Forum.

**Community:** An update on plans for the Biosphere Bee community picnic is a separate agenda item. The Biosphere Project Officer continues to deliver talks to community groups and societies, although these were curtailed in 2020.

**Culture/arts:** Isle of Man Arts Council plans to gather a new collection of Manx contemporary art in book form as a Biosphere project, with UBIOM support and input. Culture Vannin's Biosphere intern Sarah Mercer remodelled her Mann's Green Footsteps project to focus on the Island's response to and recovery from Covid and the implications for the future of the planet. The premiere of her feature-length film, *Island Utopias*, took place in September and featured 12 artists creating their responses to interviewees' comments. An invitation to participate in interviews was extended to the SPG, as was an invitation to the premiere at the Erin Arts Centre and a second screening at DEFA.

Covid has delayed Culture Vannin's project to create a Biosphere shelter at Conrhenny Plantation but this is moving forward again. Mannin Quilters' Biosphere wall-hangings, whose 'Island tour' was interrupted by Covid, are now permanently housed in the Barrool Suite in Legislative Buildings and the Chair/Vice-Chair took part in publicity in September 2020. UBIOM participated in the unveiling of the latest sculpture in the Biosphere-badged Silverdale Arts Trail in August 2020.

**Tourism:** UBIOM continues to support Visit Isle of Man promotions and initiatives and has taken part in a webinar and will attend a live event looking at the industry post Covid.

**Charity:** UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man attends the Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce Charity Forum, which is, as a Biosphere-supporting project, connecting member charities with organisations wishing to carry out corporate social responsibility work and volunteering.

**Partners:** New Partner applications continue to be received and processed, with an upsurge in interest during and since Covid, and the project now has 265 Partners, with a further nine being progressed. All Partners were, in the second half of 2020, afforded the opportunity to update their entries on [www.biosphere.im](http://www.biosphere.im) with any new actions. UBIOM supports and inputs into publicity with quotes and appearances on photos when Partners request it. Government Departments that were not Partners of UBIOM were invited to become so in autumn 2020 and this is being progressed. The majority of the Project Assistant's time is spent administering the Partnership scheme and keeping records up to date.

**Refill Isle of Man:** On the advice of the Regulation Directorate of DEFA and Director of Public Health, premises were cleared, following the Covid shutdown, to again begin offering Refill from late August 2020. A substantial amount of Project Officer's time was taken in summer adapting a new licence agreement Refill asked schemes to sign to make it compatible with Manx law and this was successfully concluded at the same time. There are 137 Refill Isle of Man Stations, a small decrease on the pre-Covid figure as some premises have closed down. In autumn 2021, Refill expanded the scheme from reusable drinking bottles to include premises offering refills of lunchboxes, cleaning products etc. The

first 'expanded' Isle of Man Refill premises have been recruited and publicity is planned early in 2021. The Project Assistant had an online meeting with the CEO and regional coordinators of Refill in December 2020 and was advised support staff are on furlough until further notice due to the situation in the UK. This means there will be less direct support from Refill but they were encouraging and supportive of the Isle of Man scheme continuing to grow.

Workload does not permit the two Biosphere officers sufficient time to grow and nurture the Refill Station network 'on the ground' and gain it a higher profile so volunteers are to be sought in early 2021 from among individuals who have signed up as Biosphere Buddies. However, the lockdown from 7<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021 has forced a further closure of Refill.

**Biosphere Lecture:** The closure of the borders meant the 2020 lecture, due to have been delivered by Natalie Fee, founder of Refill and the charity City Sea, did not go ahead. This lecture would have amplified the messages around single-use plastic use. Both speaker and sponsor preferred an in-person event. UBIOM will look to reschedule this in 2021 or investigate alternatives.

**Other:**

**Nicole Stott:** The Project Officer/Ecosystem Policy Team have, during the second half of 2021, continued to provide information on Biospheres from a global and local context to Nicole Stott, NASA astronaut and wife of Manxman Chris Stott, who is comparing the Biosphere 'model' of living with life in space for a book she is publishing in her native USA in 2021.

**Isle of Man Post Office:** UBIOM helped judge the celebratory IoM Post 'O Land of Our Birth' stamp issue competition and took part in publicity.

**Events:** The entire programme of spring, summer and autumn events due to have been attended/supported by UBIOM in 2020 was cancelled, including events where Biosphere was to have been the sole theme or a focus, including the Isle of Man Flower Festival, the Inter-Island Public Health Forum, the Small Countries Financial Management Programme and Manx LitFest. It is hoped to reschedule the event UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man had planned for Manx Wildlife Week 2020, a talk by Dr Clem Fisher, on birds and their place in culture. Officer availability and Covid restrictions permitting, UBIOM hopes to be at the Construction IoM Home and Lifestyle Expo, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021; the Environment Festival, May 2021; Manx Wildlife Week, 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021; summer agricultural shows; the Our Island, Our World Festival, September 2021, and the Isle of Man Food & Drink Festival, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

**Communications:** Lansons, the Isle of Man Government's UK agency, continues to promote UBIOM to media organisations considering featuring the Isle of Man. UBIOM featured in an extensive article on the Isle of Man in Country Life in summer 2020 and in The Times in January 2021. Blogs by the Project Officer on the topics of sustainability in the wake of Covid and why businesses should embrace sustainable practices

appeared on the Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce website and were promoted in its newsletter. UBIOM marks significant, Biosphere-related dates in the calendar with educational website and social media content, eg an article by the Project Assistant on enjoying a sustainable Christmas and supporting local retailers. UBIOM continues to produce a monthly newsletter, a curated mix of its own, Isle of Man Government and Stakeholders/Partners' news, which goes to more than 1,000 recipients globally. It welcomes SPG members' ideas and content.

The UBIOM-curated Manx Life #MyBiosphere feature continues in Business 365 magazine and on its website. Suggestions for new authors are welcome. A more detailed log of all activity is maintained and can be sent to you on request. GB thanked JO for update and asked the room for any comment. BM praised the energy and drive of biosphere team. GB thanked room and reiterated how well the team has done.

## **8. Establishment of a Nature Recovery Network – paper and discussion led by Leigh Morris, Manx Wildlife Trust**

A Nature Recovery Network (NRN) is a joined-up system of places important for plants and animals on land and at sea. It allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change. It provides plants and animals with places to live, feed and breed. Such a project in the Isle of Man would involve mapping sites for nature that exist in statute and that are voluntarily created. Members of the public, organisations, businesses, farmers, land owners, schools etc, would be encouraged to create and/or enhance more spaces for nature and then map them by entering details on a website. A website map would show the growth of spaces for nature and allow the IOM to both quantify and showcase our NRN. As well as biodiversity gains, such a network would make the Island a better place to live and visit and would potentially boost health and wellbeing. UBIOM and Manx Wildlife Trust have an opportunity to lead the way in the British Isles by establishing such a network in a UNESCO Biosphere.

Our nature reserves are a tiny proportion of the island but we care about 100% of it, how do we get more space for nature? There was discussion of microscale projects (eg. wildlife gardening) and macroscale (eg. agri-environment scheme). If this was to launch there are 3 areas that need to be planned:

- the baseline area;
- what is good enough to qualify?
- a verification process.

GB thought it was a good idea, and the Chief Minister did too, but commented that it may be 'resource hungry'. Ownership would need to be considered for GDPR reasons. There was broad support for the project but comment that: sharing pictures may encourage trespassing and landowners can be sensitive about access - the use of a statement online may help to clarify; it is an opportunity for wider public debates

and care for public sites, noting the issue of domestic animals attacking wildlife and the need to promote codes of conduct in the countryside; it fits in with schools and 'manxifying' ecoschools and the school grounds topic; there might be an 'inter-neighbourhood parish competition' and it lends itself well for rural authorities; it also ticks the Education E and it can involve 'Mrs Miggins' and is a great story to tell; it fits with both the Biodiversity Strategy target and the MWT strategy.

There followed discussion on how we measure the success of the network, what data may be available and the use of citizen science but it was pointed out that we may not need scientific measures as we 'know' these things work.

SPG approved in principle the establishment of a Nature Recovery Network for the Isle of Man as a joint UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man/Manx Wildlife Trust project.

**Action: bring a fuller proposal regarding rollout, delivery and costs and SPG participation, to the July 2021 meeting.**

RS and LM

**9. Biodiversity and Development: a guide to how the two can enhance our built environment – paper and discussion led by Edmund Southworth, Manx National Heritage**

MNH is producing a Planning and Biosphere guide to support planners, architects and developers with an easy access pamphlet providing suggestions to on how they can incorporate biodiversity into their developments. MNH's role is not to stop development, but to enable sustainable development and reward good behaviour. This will be evidence-based. Poor quality applications for planning are an issue which could be resolved with education. The idea is to produce a supplementary planning guidance by identifying procedures and sources of information in a checklist approach. For example current planning documents do not have info regarding wildflowers and non-native species. The guide will be supportive, to help people make good development decisions.

On 21<sup>st</sup> March a data set is being released to include all ancient monuments, historical landmarks and potentially registered buildings. The guides to using two major data sets we have will contribute to sustainable development.

It was noted that Planning guidance would be welcome and the more contributions from people the better. It could work alongside guidance that the DEFA Ecosystem Policy Team have drafted relating to the Wildlife Act and planning applications, the MNH guidance would be much broader. MWT has been working with Dandara/Hartford Homes having good conversations regarding gardens for new developments.

There followed a discussion regarding tree protection and it was noted that the Isle of Man has some of the strictest tree preservation laws

anywhere. A scheme like considerate constructors is also being considered and developers have stated that they would welcome advice. GB thanked ES for the update and said he was looking forward to seeing the draft.

**10. UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder Partnership Group Terms of Reference – further review, Discussion led by: Dr Richard Selman**

The Terms of Reference (TORs) for the UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder Partnership Group (SPG) were reviewed at the SPG meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and amendments accepted. ES had queried the validity of TOR 8b, which was taken away for reference to the Legislation, Policy and Research Manager of the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA). Pursuant to this query, the Legislation, Policy and Research Manager has proposed several further amendments to the TORs, presented for individual discussion/approval. GB asked for any comments on the changes proposed but there were no comments and the changes were agreed.

**ACTION: Make changes to TORs.**

**JO**

**11. Biosphere Bee community event – verbal update by Jo Overty, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Project Officer, DEFA**

JO gave an update on the Biosphere Bee project, explaining that it had been pushed back due to Covid and availability of designer time. She asked whether the project should proceed or be put on hold for a further year. It is a spring/summer outdoor event. This also meets the Engagement E previously discussed.

GB agreed that in the circumstances, the event should be pushed back, but a pilot launch event could take place this year if resources allow. It was noted that UBIOM would still need a full design suite signed off for even a small event.

**ACTION Proceed with Pilot Launch Event for Biosphere Bee, GB suggested event to be held this summer, maybe August.**

**UBIOM**

PT left meeting.

**12. UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary – verbal update and discussion led by Jo Overty**

The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme is 50 years old in 2021 with four aims for the year:

- Visibility and outreach: making the concept of Biospheres better known
- Original scientific mission: highlighting science-based initiatives

- Local grass roots solutions: promoting local activities that contribute to global challenges
- Honour MAB community: remembering the Biosphere pioneers and strengthening the network of Biospheres.

UNESCO MAB globally will roll out a new web page, a new visual identity kit, a book on the history of MABs, educational materials for schools, video messages for social media use and there are plans for an open-data web page and an exhibition. This presents an opportunity for the Isle of Man to raise its profile globally by taking part in global aspects of the celebrations. JO asked how SPG thought UBIOM should mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Arts Council had a Biosphere intern working on two major projects and they would be happy to put the logo on their banners etc. JO said the delayed biosphere showcase in schools could all be wrapped up and advised that MAB have strongly suggested video work, and perhaps the group could gain skills in video shooting through a training course.

**ACTION: to seek expressions of interest from group via a follow up email to see if there is sufficient interest for UBIOM to organise a video training course for SPG members, to contribute to the MAB 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.**

**UBIOM**

**13. Technical oversight of UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man  
Discussion led by: Jo Overty**

UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme is run in accordance with A New Roadmap for the Man and the Biosphere Programme and its Network of Biosphere Reserves, incorporating the Lima Action Plan, which sets standards for the Programme globally, the different national MAB committees and individual Biospheres. The Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves sets out the conditions for the function of a Biosphere, and each Biosphere sets out its individual aims in its nomination papers to UNESCO. Each Biosphere is subject to a periodic review on its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of becoming a Biosphere and each subsequent 10 years, and this follows a different template again. UBIOM will be subject to its first periodic review in 2026 and will start the lengthy task of preparing for that well in advance of that date. It is also possible that the periodic review procedure would be revised prior to 2026. The establishment of a technical sub-group is proposed, to consider UBIOM's progress, taking into account the established aims, framework, guidance and review structure and to ensure that we meet the main aims and criteria of MAB.

GB suggested the group comprise three members. There were offers from the table. It was noted that technical developments mean the committee would not need to be based on Island, and scrutiny and measure of success means it would be good to have independent members, though the UK MAB Committee might provide this role. Using reps from other Biospheres was also suggested.

**ACTION: Take this away and write out to group to gage interested parties, potentially an overseas rep from the UK committee and set up sub group.**

**UBIOM**

**14. Standing item: Research – verbal updates**

University College Isle of Man Masters student, Nikole Cervantes has been conducting a project surrounding sustainability in business and the biosphere business partnership scheme. Her final report will be published and presented when it is finished and will be made available to SPG. UBIOM will have another Masters student from UCM after Nikole moves on, although the nature of the next project is not yet known.

GC thanked JO for taking the student placements and explained UCM are matching businesses with an interest of the students. UCM have finalised their Higher Education partner as Chester University. In September 2022 UCM hopes to launch a sustainability degree. There are also shorter courses available that are linked to Biosphere such as 'how to live sustainably.'

There was a query regarding how much scope there is for the sustainability course to be applied to arts like fashion, etc. and if there were any traditional crafts or practices involved in the degree. The higher education strategy is taking a different approach post Covid-19 regarding the old fashioned notion of a static, three-year, course and changing and evolving.

ES updated SPG on two matters:

1. Use of a LIDAR device as part of the Calf of Man management plan. It is a laser device that picks up low resolution lumps and bumps. The device will give data on 350 sites that have not been previously recorded and it has been tested on the Calf and a bit of the Mull peninsular. It has proved the importance of technology and is a great device for the uplands, etc.
2. MNH hope to commission Bangor University to look at 17 shipwrecks, pulling together data files of shipwrecks and cross referencing crews/rescuers etc. and producing a historical environmental record. This is needed for sustainable developments such as internet cables, wind farms, etc.

LM said Sarah Hickey, MWT, has been probing peat. There are 10,000 hectares of upland peat and Sarah is measuring for depth and to see if it is actively growing along with other metrics to for future peat restoration. Lara Howe is now Sea Search Coordinator in the organisation. The Calf research plan is being run jointly with MNH, and have signed a contract for running the bird observatory. A draft discussion document is to be drafted into the research plan to try and record more data. There are 5 DfE interns who are working with Simon Sheath to develop a carbon offsetting plan.

## 15. Other updates – round the table.

BM said that Gaelg21 is a month long celebration involving grass roots activities happening later in the year (June/July). IOM has signed up to part 3 of the council of European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

MG said she is pleased to see ambassadors for Island Innovators and advised group take a look. She had attended a zoom about remote working and encouraging 'digital nomads' and recommended it.

JH said IoD had formed a Biosphere subcommittee consisting of five members. They all pool their talent as support for the SPG.

ES said Manx Wildlife Week would take place from 30<sup>th</sup> April to 9<sup>th</sup> May and added that the Council of Europe (COE) will be important post Brexit. COE runs 40 industrial routes.

JC said that not a lot is being pushed due to various factors. She has put together the environmental educators group that have met twice and aims to get local experts in to schools.

GS said the Arts Council Biosphere intern would be with the organisation for a year and sought to show the link between Biosphere and arts through two projects: Elyn – a book that will be launched in September, and a public art trail. She also had an idea about an arts and sustainability podcast and would speak to GC.

BD said that the Environment Festival would take place from 30<sup>th</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> June in Peel. Circumstances meant Beach Buddies (BB) had to put everything on hold but is has now returned to normal operations. BB had established its first international branch in Hong Kong and had branches worldwide. It was working on a project to link the University of London with students cleaning the city. Another project happening is to promote eco-tourism with LM from MWT and the DfE. Last year beach cleans were organised with cruise ship passengers to promote cleans in all ports. There are ongoing talks with major football clubs in Britain to help with community clean ups and Liverpool football club are signed up to do some litter picking. BD thanked DEFA for support.

GG said there was scope to work closer with Biosphere. The Island is being mapped for land use and mitigation. There are workstreams for sustainable urban development, environmental impact assessment, woodland grants scheme and the blue carbon plan. The IOM could be the only country to have a land management plan and biosphere status which is a lot to advertise together.

JO added that the SPG was the first group to meet with Professor Curran.

GB left meeting.

JO said complaints about litter were being directed to Biosphere and there was potential for UBIOM to establish a group to address this.

RS said that CoMin has agreed to align with the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and that the UK will be in touch regarding action under that agreement.

**Date of next meeting:**

A Wednesday in July was deemed appropriate. 14<sup>th</sup> July was suggested but JO will circulate the date when confirmed.

**Approval:**

Hon Geoffrey Boot MHK, Vice Chair

Signature: Inserted on master copy

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021

After they are formalised, the minutes will appear on [www.biosphere.im](http://www.biosphere.im)