

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
Minutes of the Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting
Wednesday 29 January 2025, 14:00-16:00

Attendees (alphabetical):

<i>Attendee name, role, organisation</i>	<i>Initials</i>	<i>Attendee name, role, organisation</i>	<i>Initials</i>
Beth Penhallurick, Biosphere Review Officer, Biosphere IOM	BP	Leigh Morris, CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust	LM
Breesha Maddrell, Director, Culture Vannin	BM	Mariella Craig, Youth Representative, Biosphere IOM	MC
Breeshey Kermode, Project Assistant, Biosphere IOM (minutes)	BK	Melanie Allen, Marketing & Comms Director, Visit IOM	MA
Clare Barber MHK, DEFA Minister and Vice Chair, Biosphere IOM	CB	Muriel Garland, The Green Centre	MG
Claire Smolas, Marketing Executive, Visit Isle of Man	CS	Paul Fletcher, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group IOM (FWAG IOM)	PF
Gail Corrin, Head of Higher Education, University College IOM (UCM)	GC	Rachel Smith, Youth Representative, Biosphere IOM	RSm
Howard Parkin, AstroManx /Isle of Man Astronomical Society	HP	Richard Selman, Head of Ecosystem Policy, DEFA (online)	RSe
Ian Parsons, President, Manx National Farmers Union (MNFU)	IP	Sarah Comish, Secretary, MNFU	SC
Jacqui Keenan, Coordinator, Biosphere IOM	JK	Scott Gallacher, Chief Officer, DEFA	SG
Jade Foster, Engagement Manager, Climate Change Team	JF	Steve Billingham, Chair, Institute of Directors Isle of Man branch	SBi
Jason Bissell, Chair, Biosphere IOM Board	JB	Steve Blackford, Head of Properties, Manx National Heritage	SBI
Ken Milne, Director of Environment, DEFA	KM	Voirrey Barron, Marketing Executive, Locate Isle of Man	VB

Apologies

Alfred Cannan MHK, Chief Minister & Biosphere SPG Chair	Jo Callister, Manx Curriculum & Climate Change Advisory Teacher, DESC
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Item	Subject	Owner/actions
01/25/01	Standing items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Barber's welcome and opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CB welcomed the room and new faces, particularly the Youth Representatives, JB as Chair of the Biosphere Board, and BP as Biosphere Review Officer. • Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Noted above. • Conflicts of interest with items on the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ None declared. • Minutes of the meeting 8 July 2024 for approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minutes approved • Action point list – review 	CB
01/25/02		
01/25/03		
01/25/04		

01/25/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The rolling action of creating a local map of the Biosphere has been moved to tasks for the Periodic Review, so it will be removed from the list ahead of July's meeting. ○ Delivering more with existing resources – an update on this paper is detailed in Item 8, the Biosphere IOM Team Delivery Report. 	
01/25/06	<p>Dark Sky status – for decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background: The Isle of Man has a strong astronomical heritage, including 26 designated Dark Sky Discovery Sites. Light pollution is increasingly being recognised as an important environmental, social, and health issue. • Proposal: HP proposes the IOM pursue designation(s) through DarkSky International, and believes the Isle of Man could ultimately become Europe's first Dark Sky Nation, benefiting astro-tourism, biodiversity, and public health. • Several designation options exist, including reserves, parks, and sanctuaries, which all possess different criteria. Potential sites include Mull Peninsula, the Calf of Man, Maughold, The Sound, the Point of Ayre, and Langness. • Application Process: The International Dark Sky Association (IDA) accreditation requires stakeholder engagement, monitoring, and light audits. A 10-year commitment to improving lighting would be likely be needed for some designations. • CB supported the proposal but raised concerns about planning and policy implications, potential private sector pushback, and the need for governance discussions. • There was broad support from Biosphere IOM and stakeholders, but it was noted that the team have limited staff resources and financial capacity. It was suggested that a sub group of the SPG is formed to explore the best way to move this forward. • MA suggested linking the initiative with the upcoming Biosphere Periodic Review. • CB asked who would be willing to be on the sub group to explore the proposal. SBI said Manx National Heritage (MNH) could look to progress Dark Sky status at some of its sites; HP, SBI, JF, and PF all offered their support. 	<p>HP BK/JK to connect HP, SBI, JF, PF</p> <p>HP, SBI, JF and PF subgroup to explore options and funding for IDA designations, starting with Calf of Man as Dark Sky Sanctuary and making a plan for further designation if appropriate.</p>
01/25/07	<p>Colvington Foundation – for attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG informed the group that Charles Colvington, who had worked for the UN, established the Foundation to support IOM students to pursue internship opportunities within the UN and its agencies. • BM requested that the matter be raised with DESC via Jo Callister. • GC will also bring it to UCM's attention. 	<p>MG MG to send info to JC at DESC. GC to share at UCM. BK to reshare with SPG mins.</p>
01/25/08	<p>Biosphere IOM Team Delivery Report</p> <p>The report was taken as read, with three things to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biosphere Isle of Man is a member of the World Network of Mountain Biosphere Reserves (WNMBR). The network is aimed at communities and cultures in mountainous regions, and addressing the challenges they face. JK proposed withdrawing from the 	<p>JK</p> <p>JK to notify WNMBR of UBIOM withdrawal.</p>

	<p>network to manage capacity within the team. No objections were raised, and withdrawal was approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biosphere Awards: The award categories and schedule are being reviewed, planned to launch in autumn 2025 and a ceremony in spring 2026, so no awards will take place in 2025. • Biosphere Partner Forum: The October event was a success, attracting around 50 attendees. Going forward, forums will be held every three months to encourage learning and networking. The next forum is scheduled for 18 Feb, with MA leading a marketing workshop. • SBI asked UBIOM to continue to engage with the private education entities, the Buchan School and King Williams College. It was raised that UNESCO Biosphere Schools Week falls when these establishments are closed. JK noted that this week has been purposefully scheduled to fall in the week prior to National Week to align more closely with cultural initiatives. • BM added that she would like to praise the work of the small team and everything that is achieved. 	<p>SBI to share his contact in KWC with UBIOM team.</p>
01/25/09	<p>Biosphere IOM Board update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JS thanked BM for her comments on the team's work and reaffirmed the same. His priorities are ensuring a successful periodic review, appointing an effective board, and developing Biosphere as a self-funding entity. • The Technical Sub Group contributed to further developing the board's structure, which is based on roles, domains, and accountabilities. Recruitment will focus on domains rather than individuals. The structure will be shared for SPG to review, before being advertised for expressions of interest. • Aim is to have members in place by Apr/May. • JK noted that the SPG should also review its own ToR. • JB reiterated his appreciation and enthusiasm for the role. 	<p>JB</p> <p>JB to circulate Board structure and updated ToR.</p> <p>SPG members to review SPG ToR, for any amendments to be agreed at July meeting.</p>
01/25/10	<p>Periodic Review update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BP will begin her role in February, leading the Periodic Review with support from the team and Board. • A proposed timeline was shared to outline key milestones. The submission to UNESCO is due in Sep 2026, and should first be approved by DEFA (Apr), UK National Commission (May) and CoMin (Jun). • A draft will be presented at the Jan 2026 SPG meeting. The review will also shape a 10-year management plan. • Advocacy and stakeholder engagement were highlighted as crucial for maintaining UNESCO recognition. 	<p>JK, JB</p>
01/25/11	<p>Youth representatives, including Youth Engagement research summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS highlighted the need for baseline data on youth engagement. During her summer research placement with UBIOM and Net Zero, she collected data and compiled a report summarising key statistics and responses across different areas. Social media emerged as the preferred communication method for young people, highlighting the need for improved outreach. She 	<p>MC, RS</p> <p>BK to share RS's Youth Engagement report</p>

	<p>recommended using the Biosphere Youth Network for gathering insights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC announced development of a Youth Engagement Strategy, noting challenges in retaining young people post-higher education. The Youth Reps have a phased engagement plan and sought SPG feedback. • RS has also established a Youth Network for the Biosphere Reserves of the British Isles & Ireland, and highlighted an upcoming youth forum in Brighton in March, to run alongside the UK MAB Committee meeting. • JB asked how the SPG could support youth engagement; RS encouraged better communication between the SPG and the Youth Representatives/network. • SBI noted that MNH will be recruiting an Environmental Engagement Officer to enhance youth outreach. • CB suggested linking the Youth Network with the Junior Achievement business challenge. 	<p>MS/RS to explore opportunities to get involved with Junior Achievement</p>
01/25/12	<p>2026 Manx in the Biosphere Exhibition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026 is the Year of the Manx Language which coincides with the Island having been a Biosphere for ten years. To celebrate and highlight the alignment between Biosphere and culture/language, there is an exhibition being planned for May 2026 that celebrates the Manx language as alive and thriving, with three core themes of 'Manx and people, Manx and place, and Manx and environment'. Partners will be encouraged to host their own 'fringe events' and there will be a more advanced update at the July SPG meeting. • BM noted that UNESCO is exploring intangible heritage initiatives, there is external interest in indigenous and minority cultures. Culture Vannin have outlined plans to offer support to micro-projects for predefined ideas and special grants in 2026, facilitating language-related events. • JK requested that data be gathered from partner events to support the periodic review. • JB suggested incorporating messaging for those outside the Island. 	<p>BK BK to update in Jul 2025 SPG meeting, inc. call for fringe events</p> <p>BK to link with Visit/Locate IOM when appropriate</p>
01/25/13	<p>Research updates</p> <p>GC - Good progress is being made to increase research outputs strategically. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pierre Cherimont (University of Toulouse MAB Masters) will intern from Mar-Sep 2025, contributing to the post-2026 management plan and research strategy. This work will align with UK UNESCO and MAB frameworks, targeting priority areas and enabling more effective research requests. ○ UCM Master's student to conduct a literature review evaluating frameworks for measuring UBIOM's value and impact. ○ UCM BA Business Management dissertation exploring the impact of Biosphere partnership on local business strategy and vision. 	<p>GC, LM, JK</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaboration with University of Chester to sponsor three PhD students for research in environment, economy, and culture, to be advertised in Apr 2025. ○ UCM Research Festival on 17 Oct 2025 will focus on Biosphere, with Dr. Doug Fox securing key speakers. • JK added that the annual Biosphere Lecture will open the Research Festival on 16 Oct, and the festival will be used to highlight both International Biosphere Reserves Day on 3 Nov, and UNESCO's 80th anniversary in Nov. BM mentioned potential funding from Culture Vannin. • LM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Manx State of Nature report is now live, supporting the progress of the Manx Biodiversity Recording Partnership. ○ A recent Wallaby survey, completed in January, estimates around 1,200 feral wallabies on the island, with findings now available. ○ MWT has acquired a house in Peel, which will provide four internship opportunities currently being developed. ○ The Inter-Island Environment Meeting will take place 17 - 19 Sep 2025 at the Villa Marina, with a reception at Government House to showcase research. The MWT website has a page for submitting research abstracts. • SB noted that accommodation at KWC is available for attendees. 	
01/25/14	<p>Round table updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FWAG IOM (PF): FWAG is hosting an event at Ballaneven Compost in February and a talk in spring on herbal lays and regenerative farming. The Silver Lapwing Awards will take place on 18th–19th Jun at Ballagawne. FWAG seeks stakeholder support and private sector sponsorship for trailers. • Locate IOM (VB): Locate is looking for relocation stories. A Graduate and Young Professionals Fair is planned, with discussions on a Biosphere and Sustainability theme. Events will focus on networking for young professionals and attracting those who have relocated. • Visit IOM (CS): Visit has developed its 2025 marketing and events strategy, incorporating Biosphere messaging, highlighting the "Extraordinary Isle" campaign and toolkit with a strong link to Biosphere and Manx culture. They are working with agencies and supporting the Biosphere Photographer in Residence, to be hosted by MWT. • IOD (SBI): Expressed gratitude for JB's involvement and reiterated IOD as a way for Biosphere/SPG members to connect with the business community. • DEFA Ecosystem Policy (RS): Various updates from the Convention on Biodiversity and UK JNCC Global Indicators. The Blue Carbon map, showing blue carbon habitats, is expected to be published soon. The BIC Invasive Species Week will run from 12–18 May, with messaging planned. • MWT (LM): Woodlands team has new staff, supported by corporate funding. The Coastal Futures Conference was attended 	CB

	<p>by David Bellamy and Lara Howe, with additional funding provided for David Beard (MFPO). A TV programme featuring Guy Martin on the Calf of Man will air soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green Centre (MG): Concerns were about the environmental impact of wind farms, recycling, and whether air, water, and soil quality improvements are being measured; KM noted that air and water quality reports are available to share from DEFA. MG also referenced the Children's Champion Report 2024, highlighting accessibility issues for disabled children at beaches. • MNFU (SC): The countryside code initiative is in its third year, with DOI considering formalising an official government countryside code. MNFU aims to engage more with secondary schools on sustainable farming. • DESC (BK on behalf of Jo Callister – JC): JC is organising three half-day Eco Schools training sessions to support schools in achieving Green Flag status. Each session has input from local biodiversity experts, with One World Centre, MWT, and Manx Birdlife contributing. In 2024, five schools attended and achieved Green Flag status. It was suggested at the DESC climate forum that linking Eco Schools to UNESCO Biosphere Week (Mon 30 Jun-Fri 4 Jul this year) would enhance its profile. Plans to organise activities and visitor engagements with the Environmental Educators Group were discussed. • Net Zero IOM (JF): The next climate survey will take place in March. Workshops are planned for April, alongside ongoing research into risks and opportunities. The annual climate report is being drafted for the June Tynwald sitting. 	<p>KM to share air and water quality reports with MG</p>
01/25/15	<p>Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None declared. 	CB
Close	<p>Date of the next meeting: Monday 14 July 2025, 14:00-16:00</p>	