



**UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting
Wednesday 25th January 2023, 2pm to 4pm**

Item: 4

Title: Minutes of meeting held 13th July 2022

Minutes of a meeting of the UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder Partnership Group (UBIOM SPG) held on Wednesday 13th July 2022, at 14:00 in the King Orry Room, Government Offices, Douglas

Present:

Dr Richard Selman	Head of Ecosystem Policy, DEFA – Chair	RS
Hon Clare Barber MHK	Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture	CB
Ms Aly Lewin	Head of Programme Delivery, Climate Change Team	AL
Miss Jo Callister	Advisory Teacher for Manx Curriculum and Climate Change, DESC	JC
Mr Peter Reid	Institute of Directors Isle of Man	PR
Mr Paul Fletcher	Isle of Man Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	PF
Ms Ali De Backer	Engagement Officer, Isle of Man Arts Council	ADB
Ms Claire Watterson	Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce	CW
Miss Jo Overty	Biosphere Project Officer, DEFA	JO
Miss Breeshey Kermodé	Biosphere Project Assistant, DEFA (minutes)	BK
Miss Emma Sayle	Masters Student, Business Sustainability (UCM)	ES
Mrs Alison Teare	Acting Head, Locate Isle of Man	AT
Mr Chris Kneale	Manx National Farmers’ Union	CK
Mrs Sarah Comish	General Secretary, Manx National Farmers’ Union	SC
Mr Leigh Morris	CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust	LM
Ms Gail Corrin	Higher Education Manager, University College Isle of Man	GC

Apologies

Hon Alfred Cannan	Chief Minister
Dr Breesha Maddrell	Director, Culture Vannin
Dr Ken Milne	Environment Director, DEFA
Mrs Muriel Garland	The Green Centre
Ms Angela Byrne	Head, Visit Isle of Man

Item	Action
2/22/1	Chief Minister’s welcome and opening remarks

<p>2/22/2</p>	<p>The Chief Minister was unable to attend and as the Minister was online, RS was asked to chair. He started by reading the Chief Minister’s opening remarks.</p> <p>Apologies Recorded above.</p>	
<p>2/22/3</p>	<p>Conflicts of interest with items on the agenda None recorded.</p>	
<p>2/22/4</p>	<p>Minutes of meeting on 26th January 2022 for approval Minutes approved. RS to sign on behalf of Chief Minister.</p>	
<p>2/22/5</p>	<p>Rolling action point list RS read through rolling action point list. Left items for agenda.</p>	
<p>2/22/6</p>	<p>Progress report – paper and verbal update by Jo Overty, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man</p> <p>Her Excellency Laura Davies, the UK Permanent Ambassador to UNESCO, visited the Island as a Tynwald guest before spending a full day with the Biosphere team and various associated stakeholders. JO read part of an email that Ms Davies sent with her thanks and praise for the Isle of Man Biosphere and the positive streams of engagement and collaborative works happening.</p> <p>The paper was taken as read and three main functions of Biospheres were reiterated to the group.</p> <p>The Biosphere Awards deadline is a month away, and JO encouraged the group to support, promote and share the initiative. The Young Nature Writer project is running through the summer and JO asked for the same support. SPG was also asked to support and participate in the Biosphere Bee Community Picnic 2022.</p>	
<p>2/22/7</p>	<p>Technical Subgroup – verbal update by Gail Corrin, Higher Education Manager, UCM, and Leigh Morris, Chief Executive, Manx Wildlife Trust, Technical Sub Group members</p> <p>The role of the group is to maintain technical oversight of UBIOM ahead of (and in preparation for) the 2026 periodic review. The process of preparing for the periodic review provides a parallel opportunity to consider our progress against the UBIOM Vision and Strategy, too. The complexity of the many, hefty and often overlapping documents that have been published about what a Biosphere is, how it should be delivered/evaluated/reviewed, renders the subgroup’s role complicated. And there are likely to be further documents published before 2026. The range of frameworks, guidelines and strategies understandably ‘assume’ that the BR is a specific region or ecosystem. Therefore their interpretation in the context of an entire nation BR adds further to this complexity.</p>	

The approach being taken is in three stages:

1. Review all key MAB documentation (1000+ pages) and categorise key requirements that we are progressing well, need more work and are a risk ('red flags') – in terms of UBIOM's periodic review.
2. Consult with SPG, then partners and (sensitively) with the public regarding IOM Biosphere and the 5 Es.
3. Provide a report for a 2023 SPG that captures:
 - progress against IOM Biosphere Strategy/the 5 Es,
 - recommends actions that should be taken in preparation for the periodic review in 2026 and,
 - offers strategic recommendations for UBIOM.

Stage 1 has been completed and has identified four pink (rather than red) flags which will be further explored in stages 2 and 3.

1. Biosphere being a filter or gatekeeper across all legislation and policies at national level, i.e. Biosphere becomes context not just content (the Isle of Man Government Island Plan provides an excellent opportunity to achieve this).
2. Data and research
3. Overt contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals
4. Management plan to implement strategic plan (balancing specificity with opportunism).

Stage 2 will commence in autumn 2022 and SPG members should expect to receive a brief questionnaire.

The Technical Subgroup is very clear that this exercise should not result in a long list of more actions for the small UBIOM team of two to deliver; the focus is to identify the high leverage actions and increase broader community ownership and activity. The excellent work of Jo, Breeshey and colleagues has provided the strongest of platforms for us to undertake this review and progress.

This shouldn't be approached as a 10-year review, but as more of a continual self-assessment for the Island. It is synchronised with the 10 year review and the timing is right as the Island Plan, climate change mitigation, corporate ESG/CSR targets, and the biodiversity strategy are all happening now. Biosphere needs to be implemented across everything and rise up the Island's agenda. The Island Plan could be the Biosphere management plan in the grand context of things.

PR added it is amazing that there are over 300 partnered organisations aligned with Biosphere and Biosphere accreditation needs to be recognised as key to how we live, as opposed to being a nice thing to have.

	<p>CB stated that when any policy is put forward there are regulations to follow and perhaps we need to implement Biosphere aims across Government policy and that she would be happy to work to have this ingrained into the various systems across the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>JO thanked the subgroup for their hard work and stated that the Island is held in high regard as an exemplary Biosphere in the eyes of UNESCO and we have been asked to execute training and provide mentorship to other Biosphere Reserves.</p> <p>AT asked how we could see climate change and Biosphere linking together better rather than them being seen as two separate things. PR said it is big responsibility to align these things as opposed to keeping them separate. GC suggested Biosphere provided the context and driver for action, with climate change being the most pressing issue within the Biosphere. The room agreed.</p> <p>ACTION: To commence stage 3 of the planned approach to maintain technical oversight of the Isle of Man Biosphere ahead of reaccreditation in 2026.</p> <p>ACTION: Work with UBIOM team to implement Biosphere aims across Government policy through Council of Ministers systems.</p>	<p>UBIOM Technical Sub Group</p> <p>UBIOM/Minister Barber</p>
2/22/8	<p>Establishment of a Nature Recovery Network – paper by Dr Richard Selman, Head of Ecosystem Policy, DEFA, and Leigh Morris, CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust</p> <p>RS stated that there is currently an application submitted with Government Technology Services (GTS) to fund and house the proposed Nature Recovery Network (NRN). LM gave a brief background on the proposed NRN and how this would link up nature sites and add to biodiversity net gain through citizen science and added that this would be a core Biosphere project, working with DEFA’s Ecosystem Policy Team. The user friendly online platform part of the project will hopefully engage more communities across the Island via the self-upload feature. The full paper and proposal can be obtained by members, by request, and the group will be updated on progress in the next biannual meeting.</p>	
2/22/9	<p>ACTION: DEFA and MWT continue to develop the Nature Recovery Network, reporting progress to the January 2023 meeting.</p> <p>Youth involvement – paper and discussion by Jo Overty</p> <p>Youth involvement is important to the UNESCO Biosphere Man and the Biosphere Programme. The UN formally defines youth as those aged 15 to 24, although MAB Programme events (see later) have invited participation from those aged 18 to 35. The MAB Programme periodic review that Biospheres undergo every 10 years asks:</p>	DEFA/MWT

<p>2/22/10</p>	<p><i>'How were young people involved in the organizations and community decision-making processes? How were their interests and needs considered within the biosphere reserve? What are the incentives or programs in place to encourage their participation?'</i></p> <p>In 2017, UBIOM advertised an opportunity for young people from the Isle of Man to attend the first MAB Programme global youth conference. Three attendees were selected and attended, from 13 applicants. It was intended that those selected would meet to form a youth forum. Unfortunately, for a series of reasons, this youth forum was not successful and after falling dormant was formally closed. UBIOM interacts with young people in many other ways: Schools Week; the Scouts and Guides' Biosphere Badge; Environment Educators' Group; direct work with schools, etc.</p> <p>The SPG of January 2022 agreed that instead of trying to create another youth body, the SPG instead advertises for one or more youth members, to garner the positive ideas and views of young people and represent them at SPG meetings.</p> <p>The draft advertisement, terms and conditions, etc. were taken as read and JO asked for comments or feedback. PR asked if any mentorship was provided and if not perhaps someone in the group could offer it as an arm's length service. There were discussions around the age of the youth that is appointed as there are 2 definitions from UNESCO for youth. PF stated that it is important that any youth representative is engaged and has a specific task or purpose and to offer them the chance to give feedback. JO said there is some risk with Government policy but if they are engaged in the right way, it should work. RS said it is about giving them a realistic context in the first instance and ensure that they know what to expect within the setting they are being brought in to. JC said it would be helpful if youth are the pioneers in this and to offer them the chance to give feedback about their experience. There were discussions around what was expected or wanted from the youth representatives and PR said perhaps Junior Achievements would be a good organisation to chat to around this. JC voiced concern that this would become something else for teachers to worry about in already difficult times. GC added that UCM sustainability students would be the perfect candidates for this.</p> <p>The proposals for advertisement, terms and conditions and appointment were agreed.</p> <p>ACTION: Advertise and recruit x 2 youth members for the Stakeholder Partnership Group</p> <p>Business sustainability toolkit – verbal update by Emma Sayle, Masters student, UCM</p> <p>As a result of her time with UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man and as her Masters project, ES has developed and launched a business sustainability toolkit that is available on the UBIOM website in the resources section, or as a physical document on request. After interviewing Biosphere partners</p>	<p>UBIOM</p>
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and some non-partners around how they feel they could be better supported in sustainability matters and if they are able to execute a more sustainable practice, the toolkit has been developed to be available for all businesses or organisations to use, whether they are Biosphere Partners or not. She worked up the toolkit predominantly through research and interviews and it is available for all different types of businesses and organisations to use in order to further improve their practice in the most sustainable manner based on their current model.

JO added that the toolkit in its current state is what Emma will be marked on for her Masters and added that Emma will re-join us for a few weeks after her placement to conduct case studies on sustainable practice within the visitor sector for Visit Isle of Man and offer assistance with public events.

2/22/11

Standing item: Research – verbal updates

GC – the fourth annual UCM Research Festival is on 23rd September and the theme is Sustainable, Secure and Vibrant, in line with the Island Plan. The festival will be opened by the Chief Minister. There has been an excellent response to the 'call for papers' and presenters will include Professor Roland Brandtjen, University of Berlin, on 'SDGs in large company-sized communities: the IOM Biosphere' and Dr Colleen McLean, Youngstown State University, Ohio, on 'Microplastics on Isle of Man Beaches'. The full programme will become available soon.

JO - Nikole Cervantes, former UBIOM UCM Masters student, attended an International Research Conference with the focus on UNESCO Biospheres in Germany in May.

LM asked what research we should be doing for the Biosphere and there was some discussion around this.

Update on the Manx State of Nature – MWT has reached out to environmental NGOs, and hopes to develop this next year for the 50th anniversary of the charity.

Seagrass – translocations have been made so lots of research happening in this area for potential sequestration projects.

Agri-Environment Scheme – MWT is the delivery partner for DEFA. The scheme is based on proven methodologies that have worked elsewhere and there is a keen focus to measure abundance and species richness as a result of the works happening. MWT's Biosphere Artist in Residence Clare Payne is going to create calendars about Manx Farmland birds as part of this.

Wallabies – MWT are conducting research on Wallabies, they are collecting dung over a 12 month period for DNA analysis. RS added there is previous data available. Secondary research will be circulated and they are looking at DNA to investigate inbreeding in the species.

<p>2/22/12</p>	<p>MWT are bringing in a Drone Ecologist with a thermal imaging camera to survey wallabies in early November. There was discussion around when the information gained can be shared.</p> <p>Round the table updates</p> <p>ADB – The Arts Council funded Clare Payne, the newly appointed Biosphere Artist in Residence.</p> <p>AT – Locate is doing a push on visitors to relocate to the Island, more recently seen in the ‘it all starts with a visit’ campaign, and there is a strong push on the Biosphere for reasons why people should relocate here.</p> <p>SC – MNFU is running a campaign on the countryside code. It is predominantly running in schools and going really well. It has gained engagement through Years 1 and 2 which is a good age for grass roots learning in this area.</p> <p>PF – The Flying Farmers Association visit finally took place after being held up for two years due to Covid. There was a big thanks from the visitors to all involved for being hosted.</p> <p>The FWAG farm walks programme has been re-established and they are conducting their 3rd walk of the summer this evening.</p> <p>A decision has been taken to re-establish the Golden Chough Award to celebrate good conservation practice on Manx farms.</p> <p>AL – The Climate Change Plan for the next five years is due to be launched. The Island Plan will include a climate change roadmap though its form is yet to be determined.</p> <p>CW – a new business sustainability group has been set up in Chamber to gain a business perspective on sustainability and has been received well by members.</p> <p>JC – UNESCO Biosphere Schools Week took place this year and this will hopefully become an annual week in schools. JC played a short video that gave an overview of the week and the activities that were happening in the different schools. The video was received very well.</p> <p>PR – there is an education programme being rolled out over the next two years by the Institute of Directors (IoD) which will include qualifying people to become directors, local CPD events and more.</p> <p>The IoD now has independent status on Island and is looking for a new committee member to be involved in third sector and sustainability issues.</p> <p>AT – Visit’s Economic Strategy to 2032 gained Tynwald approval in May and LM had input into this as a board member and added that Biosphere is an important element of visitor experience. To elevate the Partner</p>	
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<p>2/22/13</p> <p>2/22/14</p>	<p>status the hospitality sector have had a 'badge' added and there are 144 listings on a dedicated 'Biosphere partners' page.</p> <p>LM – promoted the MWT-run Festival of the Sea on 16th/17th July.</p> <p>Minister Barber concluded the meeting by stating that there is much good work going on. She extended her thanks to the Biosphere team and will pick up getting Biosphere messaging embedded in Government policy.</p> <p>Any other business</p> <p>None raised.</p> <p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 25th January 2023, 2pm to 4pm, King Orry Room, Government Offices, Douglas.</p>	
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Note: minutes will appear on www.biosphere.im once agreed.

Approval:

Hon Alfred Cannan MHK, Chief Minister and Chair of UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man.

Signature:

Date: 25th January 2023.