



UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man

Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting

Item 6: Progress report from Biosphere Project Officer

Headlines:

Local vision and strategy:

There will be a separate discussion on this.

Rolling activity plan:

August 2019 to October 2020 appended.

Staffing:

It is planned that the 0.5 of week limited-term Administrative Officer (AO), who worked on Biosphere until August 2019, when she was appointed to the Climate Emergency Consultative Transformation Team, will return to the Biosphere project in February 2020. This position is to be replaced by a 0.5 Executive Officer (EO) for 1 year. This will bring staffing back up to 1.5 officers. In addition, two MSc student internships are proposed this year, one working on a specific research project and the other lending a hand on current work (see 'Research' on the agenda).

Budget for 2019/20:

The budget agreed by DEFA for UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man in 2019/20, £50,000 is so far underspent by almost £37,000 (although routine spending continues and invoices are still due in this financial year).

Broad budget headings were set in April 2019, with a note that, as with any bottom-up area of work, priorities might change. The underspend is due to unexpected savings in several areas and frugal budgeting but also due to several envisaged projects and ideas not yet having been progressed.

The most significant areas where spending is so far saved are: Attendance at MAB Youth Forum in China (see report below); website and materials associated with new Vision and Strategy (being progressed); Masters student (interview with candidate took place yesterday); mooted events/speakers (being progressed).

Attendance at UNESCO events:

Leo Wasley, a Member of the UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Youth Forum, was one of two young people selected to represent UK and Ireland Biospheres at the second UNESCO MAB

Youth Forum held in Changbaishan Biosphere, China, from 15th to 18th September 2019. The event had the theme 'Committed to Biodiversity' and informed the MAB Youth Forum's views to the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, taking place in China in 2020. Much of the cost of the trip was met by UNESCO and the host Biosphere. Leo's report on the event featured on our website and in a recent newsletter and Leo's employer, PwC, a new Biosphere partner, has kindly offered him time to commit to UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man activities within his workplace.

The Project Officer attended the autumn 2019 meeting of the UK Man and the Biosphere Committee, held in London on 6th November. The meeting was well attended, by all current and candidate UK and Ireland Biospheres and representatives from DEFRA, the Scottish Government, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the UK Commission for UNESCO, and proved a useful exchange of ideas and contacts. The Isle of Man has offered to host the spring 2020 meeting of UK MAB and this needs to be accommodated into a busy April/May calendar.

World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves:

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man joined this network in the summer of 2018 and is among Biospheres contributing to the first phase of its Zero Plastics initiative, along with Archipelago Sea Area, Blekinge archipelago, Cat Ba Archipelago, the Commander Islands, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, La Selle, Lanzarote, Menorca, Ometepe, Península de Guanahacabibes, Terres de l'Ebre and Urdaibai. The WNICBRs biannual newsletter (autumn 2019) featured a lengthy article by Dr Richard Selman, Head of Ecosystem Policy, DEFA, on the Isle of Man's commitment to reducing single-use plastics.

Awards:

The UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Awards were held for the second time on 28th October 2019, with categories for environment, energy, education/public awareness and sustainability. They attracted 45 entries. The awards will be repeated in 2020.

Partners:

The Chief Minister presented UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man's 200th Partner with its certificate in December 2019 and this was publicised. There are now 207 Partners across the categories of Government, community, education, business and environment/culture. These include umbrella organisations such as Chamber of Commerce and WI, meaning the 'reach' is even higher. Interest is high and Partners frequently wish to meet ahead of participating. Administering the scheme and the necessary record-keeping is a sizeable part of the Project Officer's workload. We recently offered all Partners window/car stickers for their premises/vehicles and these were well-received, necessitating a reprint.

Sector work:

Business:

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man engages with business and commerce at various levels. Employers large and small continue to sign up as business Partners. Business frequently seek guidance on how to be more sustainable. It is hoped to work up a suitable workshop programme in 2020 and the Head of Ecosystem Policy and Biosphere Project Officer will host a first meeting of interested parties shortly. A planned event, collaborating with a private sector company, to encourage business sustainability was called off by the company as a result of the protest at the 2019 UNESCO Biosphere Awards and potential for reputational damage. Biosphere forms part of a new charity forum being hosted by Chamber of Commerce, which met for the first time on 21st January.

Community:

The project officer continues to give talks to community groups. See events.

Culture:

Culture Vannin has appointed a Biosphere intern for a year who has embarked on the Mann's Green Footsteps project, examining how the Isle of Man is adapting to climate change, and the integrated Postcards for the Future sessions. Members of the Stakeholder Partnership Group were invited by email (9th December) to take part in the initiative.

Culture Vannin has also shortlisted designs for a 'Biosphere Shelter' to be sited at Conrhenny Plantation, subject to planning permission.

Education:

There will be a separate update from DESC and UCM.

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man has launched the Sustainable Development Goals Book Club and, each month for 17 months, will purchase for all primary schools books on the SDGs. Schools have been invited to make the SDG Book Club the theme of their World Book Day celebrations in March 2020 and is also inviting young people to review the books. The Isle of Man's adoption of this initiative featured in the biannual newsletter of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves (January 2020).

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man hosts international, UCM and secondary school students on work experience throughout the year. These included hosting a visit by Zoe Russell, University of Stirling (September 2019) who is working on a PhD in nature and culture, with an emphasis on Biospheres. Zoe was fortunate to meet many Biosphere Stakeholder Partnership Group Members during her visit.

Food and drink:

The sector continues to be a strong supporter of the Biosphere and the Food Marketing Executive and Biosphere Project Officer collaborate closely on marketing and ideas.

The Food and Drink Awards 2019 again had a Biosphere element to judging criteria and the Head of Ecosystem Policy was a judge.

Chef Pippa Lovell, founder of Versa restaurant, promoted UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man on the international stage when she won the prize for Social Responsibility in the UK and North European heat of the global San Pellegrino Young Chef contest (October 2019).

Tourism:

A second training event was held (October 2019) for the Guild of Manx Registered Tour Guides, following the successful session in January 2019. Similar training will shortly be delivered for staff of the Isle of Man Welcome Centre. The Project Officer and other Ecosystem Policy Team officers are working with Visit Isle of Man over other initiatives and form part of a new marketing forum.

Arts:

A meeting was held yesterday with the Isle of Man Arts Council to discuss more collaborative working and projects.

Projects and collaborations:

Biosphere wall-hangings:

Mannin Quilters has, in liaison with UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man, produced six wall-hangings, one for each sheading, telling of life in our Biosphere. They will go on show at four venues, Island-wide, from next week, with the Chief Minister launching the 'tour' at an event at Castletown Civic Centre on 3rd February 2020. SPG members have been invited. Schools have been invited to create their own artwork, inspired by the project.

Isle of Man Flower Festival:

The Island-wide festival, in July 2020, will have a Biosphere theme and the strapline 'A special place for people and nature'. The Project Officer is supporting training sessions and workshops for venues to assist them to interpret the theme.

Refill Isle of Man:

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man has been licensed to deliver the nationwide Refill scheme since January 2019. The scheme is reducing plastic consumption and litter. Prior to launch, seven Refill Isle of Man premises had signed up, independently. UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man has recruited a further 137 Refill Stations, Island-wide, including shops, cafes, restaurants, museums, libraries and tourism attractions. These include several new outdoor water fountains at places where people congregate and might otherwise use plastic bottles, eg TT Grandstand, Mooragh Park, Douglas' promenades. While recruitment of Stations has slowed due to other priorities, there is good representation in all areas of the Isle of Man. UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man publicised the scheme via its own Refill Station of the Week feature during the summer and autumn and via a campaign ahead of Christmas shopping and socialising and featured in Refill's nationwide 'end of year' summary. Schools cannot be Refill Stations but are considering their own scheme for parents. Such is the take-up of Refill, now, internationally, that City to Sea is seeking to split UK and international operators. It wishes the Isle of Man to move to a free-of-charge 'international' agreement, but without the current marketing and administrative support currently provided by its regional coordinator. It has agreed a six-month extension to the current agreement because we do not believe that we can operate on the free agreement due to problems adding stations via the app from the Isle of Man, which Refill has not resolved. Its support is necessary to maintain this service. Ongoing service agreement is therefore subject to negotiation.

'Biosphere Badge':

The Scout Association of the Isle of Man, like Girlguiding Isle of Man, now offers a 'Biosphere Badge', supported by UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man. The Scouts gain the badge by fulfilling three or more activities relating to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Meanwhile, more than 200 Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers have earned the Guides' version of the Badge. The Project Officer will be keynote speaker at the Guides' annual leaders' awards celebration in February 2020. The badge will also feature in a 'Wider Value of UNESCO to the UK' report, due to be published shortly by UNESCO in the UK.

Poetry Map:

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man collaborated with the Manx Bard and Culture Vannin to create a Poetry Map of the Island, in line with the ethos of connecting people with nature. More than 170 entries were submitted and the winners received their prizes from Hon Geoffrey Boot MHK, Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture, on 25th September. The Map provides a lasting resource for visitors and locals. Poems are used on social media on a topical basis.

Events:

2019:

Since the last SPG meeting, the Ecosystem Policy Team has taken part in the weather-hit Royal Manx Agricultural Show (August 2019), showcasing the Island's biodiversity, and UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man took part in the Isle of Man Food & Drink Festival (September 2019) hosting games for children around the Sustainable Development Goals and giving them the chance to make their 'Wish for the World'.

2020:

Manx Wildlife Week – 8th-17th May 2020:

DEFA as a whole and UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man expect to host events as part of the 'week'. In 2019, Biosphere held an event for and delivered by young people. The Chief Minister, Chairman of the UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder Partnership Group, has suggested 'birds' as a theme for our 2020 contribution and a speaker is being investigated.

Biosphere Lecture 2020:

Natalie Fee, founder of the charity City to Sea, which runs the Refill scheme, has been invited to deliver the next lecture and arrangements are being discussed. There is a provisional date of 21st May 2020. Zurich International is continuing its part-sponsorship of the lecture.

Festivals/shows 2020:

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man and/or Ecosystem Policy Team will have stands at the Environment Festival (1st/2nd May), Southern Agricultural Show (25th/26th July), Royal Manx Agricultural Show (7th/8th August), Our Island; Our World Festival (9th-12th September) and Isle of Man Food & Drink Festival (19th/20th September), subject to staff availability, as lieu time can become a factor.

Talks/workshops 2020:

As well as Guides, the Project Officer so far has talks diarised in 2020 for the Isle of Man Financial Services Authority, Marown School, Braddan Rainbows, the KIT Club and University of the Third Age.

Website:

UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man has made improvements to its website www.biosphere.im, with a new, searchable, directory of Partners, an online application form and other new features. A STEP student made good headway during summer 2019 updating Partners' entries to reflect their current activity and won one of the prizes at the Department for Enterprise's STEP awards.

Marketing/publicity:

Traditional media:

Via Department for Enterprise and the Cabinet Office Communications Service, we continue to work with Lansons and Hope and Glory to promote the Island internationally and they pitch messages to media as appropriate.

The Project Officer appeared on the Mannin Line on Manx Radio on 4th November.

An article about the Isle of Man's waterways management appeared in the November edition of 'Environment', the magazine of the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management.

The Manx Life #MyBiosphere feature, which appeared in Manx Life from May 2018 to December 2019, continues from January 2020 in a revamped lifestyle section in Business 365.

A double-page article on how to 'have a sustainable Christmas' was placed in the December edition of Manx Life and received good feedback.

A lengthy article about the Isle of Man, featuring Biosphere, featured on National Geographic's website on 20th January 2020.

The project has again been offered space in the 2020 edition of Ready Steady Go, the summer publication for primary-aged pupils.

Social media:

We continue to update three social media channels – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter – at least six days a week and sometimes more than once a day, sharing our own news and that of Partners and other compatible groups/initiatives. We encourage SPG partners to show support by not only 'liking' and 'sharing' these posts but mentioning their own Biosphere-related activities and support, tagging us.

Newsletter:

We continue to produce a monthly newsletter, containing a curated combination of our own and relevant Isle of Man Government news and that of Partners and other groups and initiatives. Production of a newsletter is encouraged under the global Biosphere Lima reporting framework, under which we will undergo periodic review, 2026.

See below for detailed activity report.

<i>AUGUST 2019</i>			
Manx Life #MyBiosphere article for September		Start August	Done
Meeting re 2020 Isle of Man Flower Festival		5 th August	Done
Planning meeting re Inter-Island Public Health Forum Conference		25 th June 2019	Done
Festival Interceltique de Lorient celebrates UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man		2 nd to 11 th August	Done
Attend Royal Manx Agricultural Show		9 th /10 th August	Done
Poetry Map judging		19 th August	Done
Meet KPMG		19 th August	Done
Attend Our Island; Our World event		31 st August	Done
Walk the Isle of Man festival: attend 6 x training sessions		Whole month	Done
August newsletter			Done
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	Done
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	Done
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	Done
<i>SEPTEMBER 2019</i>			
<i>16th Sept: UN International Day for Protection of the Ozone Layer</i>			
<i>27th Sept: UN World Tourism Day</i>			
<i>27th Sept: UN World Maritime Day *(or last Thurs in Sept)</i>			
Manx Life #MyBiosphere article for October		Start September	Done
Start of year letter to schools		3 rd September	Done
Meeting with DforE, Visit Isle of Man, MNH, IoM Bus and Rail and Steam Packet re year ahead planning (quarterly)		3 rd September	Done
Assembly at Laxey School ahead of SCS 50 th anniversary tree planting		10 th September	Done
Laxey School ahead of SCS 50 th anniversary tree planting		12 th September	Couldn't attend due to workload
Attend Isle of Man Food and Drink Festival		14 th /15 th September	Done
Talk to visiting CPA politicians		17 th September	Done
Tour guide training		23 rd September	Done
Launch of Extraordinary Story part II		23 rd September	Done
Poetry Map presentation		25 th September	Done
Biosphere Awards judging		27 th September	Done

Walk the Isle of Man festival: attend launch event and involved all week		29 th Sept-6 th Oct	Done
September newsletter			Done
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	Done
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	Done
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	Done
<i>OCTOBER 2019</i>			
<i>1st Oct: World Habitat Day *(first Mon in Oct)</i>			
<i>12th Oct: UN World Migratory Birds Day *(second Sat in Oct)</i>			
Manx Life #MyBiosphere article for November		Start October	Done
Launch of SDG Book Club in schools		7 th October	Done
MWT Lottery workshop one		9 th October	Cancelled
MWT Lottery workshop two		12 th October	Cancelled
Termly meeting with DESC		16 th October	Done
Meeting with One World Centre		16 th October	Done
Launch of Scouts Badge		21 st October	Done
Biosphere Business Game at UCM		23 rd October	Cancelled
Speak at launch of new book at The Hub		24 th October	Done
Workshops at Marown School		24 th October	Delayed
Biosphere Awards		28 th October	
Hop-tu-Naa Hacks		Last week in October	Done
October newsletter			Done
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	Done
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	Done
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	Done
<i>NOVEMBER 2019</i>			
Manx Life #MyBiosphere article for December		Start November	Done
Biennial meeting UK MAB		6 th November	Done
Talk to Isle of Man Business Club		12 th November	Done
Workshops at Marown School		28 th November	Done
Deadline for bi-annual newsletter of WNICBRs		End Nov	Done
Meeting with DforE, Visit Isle of Man, MNH, IoM Bus and Rail and Steam Packet re year ahead planning (will be quarterly)		TBC	Delayed
Sustainable Christmas article Manx Life			Done

November newsletter			Done
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	Done
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	Done
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	Done
<i>DECEMBER 2019</i>			
Manx Life #MyBiosphere article for January		Start December	Done
Launch of Culture Vannin Biosphere project Mann's Green Footsteps		Start December	Done
December newsletter		9 th December	Done
Talk to IOMFSA		18 th December	Delayed
Talk to Braddan Rainbows		TBC	Delayed
December newsletter			Done
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	Done
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	Done
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	Done

<i>JANUARY 2020</i>			
<i>20th Jan: Big Energy Saving Week</i>			
New Year charity volunteers series on social media		Start January	Done
#MyBiosphere article for February		Start January	Done
IoM Flower Festival planning meeting		21 st January	Done
Meeting of Chamber of Commerce CSR Cluster		21 st January	Done
Meeting with Isle of Man Arts Council		28 th January	Done
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting		29 th January	
Workshop at Marown School		30 th January	
Talk to IoMFSA		30 th January	
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>FEBRUARY 2020</i>			
<i>2nd February: World Wetlands Day</i>			
<i>11th February: International Day of Women and Girls in Science</i>			
#MyBiosphere article for March		Start February	Done

Talk to Girlguiding IoM Awards Dinner		15 th February	
World Biodiversity Forum, Davos		23 rd to 28 th February	
February newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>MARCH 2020</i>			
6th March: British Science Week			
22nd March: World Day for Water			
#MyBiosphere article for April		Start March	
Talk to IoM KIT Club		2 nd March	
#SDGBookClub at World Book Day		5 th March	
IoM Flower Festival workshops		24 th March	
March newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>APRIL 2020</i>			
22nd April: Earth Day			
27th April: National Water Saving Week			
#MyBiosphere article for May		Start April	
April newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>MAY 2020</i>			
9th May: World Migratory Bird Day (repeated in October)			
22nd May: International Day for Biological Diversity			
#MyBiosphere article for June		Start May	
Environment Festival		1 st /2 nd May 2020	
Manx Wildlife Week		8 th to 17 th May 2020	
Invasive Species Week		18 th to 22 nd May 2020	

UNESCO Biosphere Lecture		21 st May 2020 TBC	
Launch UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Awards		TBC	
Host UK and Ireland MAB meeting		TBC	
UCM student – 6 weeks		Whole month (and June)	
May newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>JUNE 2020</i>			
5th June: World Environment Day			
8th June: World Oceans Day			
#MyBiosphere article for July		Start June	
UN Oceans Conference, Lisbon		2 nd -6 th June	
Participate in Inter-Island Public Health Forum Conference		25 th June 2020	
UCM student - continued		Start of month	
Festival of Trees: enter if participating		TBC	
June newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>JULY 2020</i>			
15th July: World Youth Skills Day			
#MyBiosphere article for August		Start July	
Isle of Man Flower Festival has Biosphere theme		5 th to 11 th July 2020	
Talk to University of the Third Age (U3A)		16 th July 2020	
Southern Agricultural Show		25 th /26 th July 2020	
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting		TBC	
July newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>AUGUST 2020</i>			

#MyBiosphere article for September		Start August	
Royal Manx Agricultural Show		7 th /8 th August 2020	
August newsletter			
Culture Vannin Biosphere project Mann's Green Footsteps: closing festival		TBC	
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>SEPTEMBER 2020</i>			
#MyBiosphere article for October		Start September	
Our Island Our World Festival, Peel		9 th -12 th September	
Isle of Man Food & Drink Festival		19 th /20 th September 2020	
Fifth anniversary of UN SDGs: global activity		28 th September	
Biosphere theme for Hall Caine Prize/Manx LitFest		September 2020	
September newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>OCTOBER 2020</i>			
#MyBiosphere article for November		Start October	
UN Biodiversity Conference		5 th -10 th October	
October newsletter			
Process new Partner applications		Whole month	
Promote Refill Isle of Man and process applications		Whole month	
Maintain 4 x social media channels each day		Whole month	
<i>TBC or AFTER OCTOBER 2020</i>			
Launch of new Vision and Strategy		TBC	
Launch of revised website		TBC	
Launch of revised youth forum		TBC	
Training for welcome centre staff		TBC	
Interview with HBN Primary newsletter in 'forest garden		TBC spring term 2020	
Collaboration with 'Radio Willaston School'		TBC spring term 2020	

KMPG business sustainability talk		TBC	
Circular economy talk/workshops		TBC	
Plogolution launch with 3 POP		TBC	
Kickstart work running up to big 'half way' education event 2021		TBC	
Launch of 'Bikers for Biosphere' scheme		TBC	
Invite local authorities to participate in Biosphere Partnerships		TBC	
Launch of Biosphere Bank		TBC	
Collaboration with IoM Photographic Society		TBC	
Shop 'open' and 'closed' signs		TBC	
Shop window competition		TBC	
Create educational materials		TBC	
Govt staff and public drop ins to learn about Biosphere		TBC	