



**UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting
Monday 10th July 2023, 11am-1pm**

Item: 7

Short title: Progress report

Discussion led by: Jo Overty, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Project Officer

Note this report covers the period 29/12/2022 to 30/6/2023

Headlines:

UNESCO:

The UBIOM Project Officer attended the UK Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee bi-annual meeting, and associated field trip, held in candidate Biosphere Binavenagh, Northern Ireland, on 15th/16th March 2023. Headlines include:

- Secretary-General for UNESCO in the UK James Bridge raised the possibility of an Isle of Man official visit to UNESCO HQ in Paris.
- UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC) is taking first steps to delivering the 'Local to Global: Building a Resilient UNESCO Network in the UK' workstreams afforded by the £250,000 grant granted by the UK National Lottery Heritage Fund. Note this programme will only directly involve/benefit UK UNESCO designations but associated resources etc. will benefit UBIOM.
- An online and printed tourism map is being produced by UKNC, utilising a well-known artist, for all UK UNESCO designated sites, part funded by the 'Local to Global' funding and part by the UK Government's GREAT campaign, promoting the 'Great' in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Isle of Man will feature.
- The UK's Permanent Ambassador to UNESCO, Hon Laura Davies, who visited the Isle of Man in 2022, is moving on in July 2023 and her replacement, yet to be announced, has been appointed and visits to sites will be arranged.
- Noting cost, workloads and carbon of travel, the committee agreed biannual meetings will, for now, be – online (autumn) and in person (spring). However, in person attendance is expected where the meetings have that format. The spring 2024 meeting will be in Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere, showcasing its work resulting from its new £1.9m funding and its new eco-headquarters.
- Jersey and Guernsey are potential candidate Biospheres.

As well as the committee meetings, UBIOM attends follow up biannual meetings of UK, Isle of Man and Biosphere Coordinators, the next being on 8th June 2023 (outwith the scope of this report) and is taking part in new sub-groups including on natural capital and food promotion in a Biosphere context.

A strong new section is being created for Biospheres on the UKNC website and all Biospheres are contributing to an infographic about UK, Isle of Man and Ireland Biospheres.

The UBIOM Project Officer/Project Assistant participated in two, to date, online workshops hosted by UKNC regarding delivering 'Local to Global'. The next is on Tynwald Day and is about 'Audience Development, Stakeholder Mapping and Inclusion'.

The UBIOM Project Assistant attended two online workshops in Cornwall at the University of Exeter Penryn Campus early in the year and presented to the working group about the Isle of Man Biosphere as requested by the steering group for the potential Cornwall and Isles of Scilly application.

The UBIOM Project Officer/Project Assistant participated in three of four online meetings held in spring 2023 to shape the new five-year strategy of the World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves (WNICBRs). The fourth fell on Coronation Bank Holiday and we could not attend. The plan is now in circulation and UBIOM will insert where it sees its priorities, as per a request of the WNICBRs.

The Isle of Man Government's Uplands Manager and Uplands Officer attended the inaugural strategy-setting meeting of the new World Network of Mountain Biospheres, of which the Island is a member, on May 24th 2023.

The UBIOM Project Officer/Project Assistant are attending meetings in summer and autumn 2023 of a proposed new World Network of Tourism Biosphere Reserves, emerging from the EuroMAB meeting in September 2023. The inaugural meeting in February 2023 suffered technical issues and officers were unable to take part.

The Second International Day of the Biosphere Reserve will be held on 3rd November 2023, the first widely hailed a success by UNESCO. As with 2023, it's expected there will be no globally prescribed theme, with Biosphere networks selecting their own to best highlight their work. The UK MAB Committee has identified the UNESCO global hashtag #ItsAboutLife as a simple and powerful tool to tell stories of the benefits of living in a Biosphere.

Tynwald:

The Environment Minister and Vice-chair of UBIOM Hon Clare Barber MHK will make a statement to the July 2023 sitting of Tynwald on the value of UBIOM to the Isle of Man.

Staffing:

UBIOM continues to have two officers: a project officer (HEO) and an administrative officer (AO).

Budget for 2023/24:

UBIOM has a budget of £50,000 for 2023/24, the same as the two previous years. In 2022/23, the final spend was £35,516.12, with the underspend attributable to frugal budgeting; not having a UCM student with a 'paid' aspect to their internment, which was

unknown until late in the financial year; a major initiative rolling into 2023/24 and other projects not being progressed in the year due to workload.

Five Es current/planned project updates:

It is hoped that one headline project per E per year will be delivered (some will span multiple years).

Economy:

UBIOM, in partnership with Department of Enterprise, Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce, Net Zero Isle of Man, One World Centre and University College Isle of Man, will repeat, in September/October 2023, 'Sustainable Mann' a six-part workshop series for businesses around sustainability. The first two series each led to 14 businesses/organisations earning the 'Sustainable Mann' accreditation. A private sector training provider is seeking to deliver these workshops on UBIOM/Partners' behalf in 2024 and that is being discussed.

Education:

Schools' Biosphere Week will be held for a second year, from 26th-30th June 2023.

Engagement:

Although it has been difficult to measure uptake in 2022, the Biosphere Bee Community Picnic is being repeated in 2023, encouraging people to get out into nature in a respectful way, come together and enjoy local produce. The event was chosen by the Isle of Man Government as an official Coronation event in May 2023. Participants who register an event receive an attractive 'how to' guide and other assets from UBIOM. The initiative came from the SPG and we hope SPG members hold events and support and promote this project in 2023.

Enjoyment:

Artreach Studios continues to work with the support of UBIOM and others to develop its multi-dimensional science/art/educational project 'The Big Blue Project', connecting people with the sea. It has a research and development grant from Culture Vannin, has secured some funding from the Isle of Man Arts Council for one aspect of the project and is looking to secure corporate sponsorship. It is not known when the project can be launched, or on what scale.

Environment:

UBIOM and Manx Wildlife Trust will launch the Nature Recovery Network in June 2023. The network allows landowners, custodians and managers to plot their contribution to nature and receive a score, featuring on a map if it is above a certain score, and to receive hints on how to improve their contribution, and to view a database of growing nature commitment.

UBIOM supported The Manx Nature Show, at Cathedral Isle of Man, staged by Biosphere Partner Manx Whale and Dolphin Watch from February half term 2023 to Manx Wildlife Week in May 2023 and celebrating biodiversity and conservation work in our Biosphere. A new home is being sought for the 20 display boards etc. to continue the exhibition.

Other updates: - alphabetical:

3 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future'

Awards:

The UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Awards 2023 were launched on 8th May 2023, with entries open until 11th August 2023 and a prize presentation on October 11th 2023. This year there are six categories – the 5Es of 'Working Together for a Sustainable Future' plus energy, as the awards grew from the original Isle of Man Government Energy Awards.

Communications:

UBIOM was mentioned in travel features in the Guardian and the Daily Mail in early June 2023. UBIOM assists high-level approaches/high-profile media opportunities, but these must remain confidential.

Locate Isle of Man approached the UBIOM team in regard to a short docu-series, of which an episode is due to be filmed on Island this summer highlighting the Biosphere as a destination for sustainable tourism.

The UBIOM-curated Manx Life #MyBiosphere feature, which is now 55 editions old, leading to much positive publicity for the Isle of Man, has relocated to the Green Life section of the Manx Independent after Business 365 magazine sadly closed down. The columns are entirely positive and we welcome shares on social media etc.

The UBIOM newsletter which goes to 1200 subscribers globally, is now published every other month (previously monthly) due to the time and care needed to seek out contributions and curate, compile and test it.

Four UBIOM social media channels are updated as often as the Project Officer's time allows but at least six days a week. UBIOM YouTube now features 45 videos.

Culture/arts:

The Isle of Man Art Society's Easter exhibition at the Villa Marina Arcade at Easter 2023 for a second year celebrated and was supported by UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man.

On 29th June 2023, UBIOM will sit on the selection panel for the second Manx Wildlife Trust Biosphere Artist in Residence, funded by Isle of Man Arts Council.

A 2023/24 collaboration between UBIOM and the Southern Photographic Society is in the early stages of discussion.

A cultural project regarding Manx place names in partnership with Culture Vannin is set to go ahead in the spring of 2024.

Eden Project Morecambe:

At the Chief Minister's invitation, the Director of Environment, Head of Ecosystem Policy and UBIOM Project Officer met Sir Tim Smit and his team from the Eden Project and Eden Morecambe on 31st March 2023 and discussed possible connections and synergies with UBIOM/the Isle of Man.

Education:

The UBIOM and University College Isle of Man Undergraduate Sustainability Student Placement Scheme is running for a second year in 2023, with organisations that offered to

host a student in 2022 but that were unsuccessful in securing one being offered the first chance to take part prior to any advertising being done.

Assemblies were delivered at Andreas and St John's Primary Schools on the back of an Eco Schools workshop where the UBIOM Project Assistant delivered a Biosphere talk to primary teachers.

Dawn Colley, former Education Officer with Manx Wildlife Trust, is assisting UBIOM to deliver talks to school and youth groups. (in some cases in support of the Scouts and Guides' Biosphere Badge).

Events:

Subject to two UBIOM staff and volunteer availability, UBIOM hopes to attend a full programme of summer events in 2023, including the inaugural Douglas Beach Day (1st July) and Southern Agricultural Show (29th/30th July), Royal Manx Agricultural Show (10th/11th August 2023) and Isle of Man Food & Drink Festival (16th/17th September). Expressions of assistance from SPG members have been gratefully received and, at the time of finishing this report (3rd June 2023), DEFA as a whole is deciding on the format and size of its attendance and volunteers will shortly be contacted.

There is a proposal being worked up to potentially see a large scale Biosphere Bee Community Picnic at Tynwald Day Fayre at the site where the Global Village used to operate. This was suggested by Tynwald organisers.

UBIOM is collaborating with Biosphere Partner charity Love Tech and Manx Wildlife Trust on a new summer nature exploration challenge for young people. It will also take part for the first time in the Love Tech Summer Open Day on 22nd July 2023.

Heritage:

UBIOM is supporting a screening at the Manx Museum on 15th July 2023 of 'Grandad and the Pier', charting the community effort to refurbish Biosphere Partner Queen's Pier through the eyes of nonagenarian instigator Tom Durrant.

Lecture:

The second UBIOM Lecture was held on 25th January 2023 at the Manx Museum. Dr Roger Barker, Director of Policy and Corporate Governance for the IoD, based in London, spoke on 'The role of businesses in creating a sustainable future'. Speakers and sponsors for a 2024 lecture are being sounded out, possibly on a cultural theme.

Nature:

The fourth UBIOM Young Nature Writer challenge was launched in May 2023 in Manx Wildlife Week and the closing date for entries is the end of the school holidays in September 2023. The initiative is run with Manx Wildlife Trust, Manx Ornithological Society and the Isle of Man Examiner. Thanks to the Cabinet Office Communications Team, Liz Bonnin, TV presenter and President of The Wildlife Trusts, filmed a video encouraging entries while visiting the Island in April 2023.

Partner scheme:

Applications from organisations wishing to take the Biosphere Pledge and become Partners continue to come in healthily and running this scheme and the necessary record keeping

forms the majority of the UBIOM Project Assistant's time. The UBIOM Project Officer and Project Assistant also regularly meet with boards and directors of organisations keen to get involved as Partners, to enhance their understanding of what the commitment entails. And they support the growing number of communications from Partners and their PR agencies regarding how their Partner Pledge is steering their positive actions. There are currently 340 Partners, with a further five applications being progressed.

Refill Isle of Man:

Time to grow the Refill Isle of Man scheme has been restricted, as this generally requires in person visits and catching the right person in. Some Refill Stations have closed, so, although new ones have been recruited, overall Station numbers are static at 157. UBIOM has invited Refill Stations to participate in World Refill Day on 16th June 2023. The Biosphere student volunteer 2022/23 has done great work streamlining and improving record keeping.

Research:

As learning/research is an important global function of Biospheres, UBIOM has sought to be more closely involved in the fifth UCM Research Festival in 2023. It has provided an introduction to a possible high profile speaker, to be confirmed. It had been hoped that new UK MAB Committee Chair Professor Marc Metzger, Edinburgh University, would speak but his lecturing commitments prevent it this year.

Rubbish Group:

In May 2023, UBIOM launched a campaign with Bus Vannin to encourage bus passengers to carefully dispose of tickets. Posters appear on buses that have poster frames and advertisements will run on tickets once the next batch is produced.

The UBIOM Project Officer has not had time to return to the more substantive piece of work the cross-sector group was created for, creating a campaign or education programme, but has applied for a STEP student for eight weeks under the Department of Enterprise scheme to provide work-based opportunities with outcomes for second year undergraduates and it is hoped this can be progressed if UBIOM is allocated a student.

Talks:

UBIOM regularly receives invitations to deliver talks but are unable to fulfil them all, trying to deliver on those that will attract positive and far reaching engagement. A new online form on www.biosphere.im captures all requests, saving time.

Tourism:

UBIOM continues to work with Visit Isle of Man on work streams such as Visitor First.

Youth involvement:

Despite inquiries, it is unknown when and where the next/3rd UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme Youth Conference will be held.

UBIOM has declined approaches from students on the Biosphere Management course at the University of Toulouse, France, for 20-week internships as the sum it could pay would not allow the student to rent accommodation of a suitable standard or enjoy life. Other UK and Ireland Biospheres have turned down approaches and this stance is supported by the UK MAB Committee.

This is a brief summary of the main work of UBIOM. A detailed log of all activity is maintained and will be sent to you on request.

Jo Overty and Breeshey Kermode
Project Officer and Project Assistant
UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
3rd June 2023.