

IUCN UK Committee
Annual General Meeting

23rd January 2008

**Prince Albert Suite
London Zoo
Regent's Park
London
NW1 4RY**

Contents

Preface	2
<i>Annual General Meeting</i>	
Chair's Welcome	2
Committee Annual Review	2
Review of IUCN UK National Committee: its function and objectives	3
Report of the 2007 AGM and matters arising	4
Report from Regional Councillor	4
Election of Executive Committee for 2008	4
Financial Report from Treasurer	5
Preparations for the Barcelona Congress	5
Closing remarks	7
Appendix I – 2006-07 Financial Records	8

Preface

The IUCN UK National Committee 2008 Annual General Meeting and a Members' Meeting were held concurrently on January 23rd 2007 in the Prince Albert Suite at London Zoo, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY.

The purpose of the AGM was to enable the membership to conduct the business of the UK Committee. Following the AGM, the Members' meeting addressed the topic of species translocation under the heading of "Re-introduction of Species in the UK: putting guidance into practice". The AGM and Members' meeting were both chaired by Chris Mahon.

This report on the AGM was prepared by John Henson Webb from notes taken by Dr Vin Fleming and John Henson Webb.

IUCN UK National Committee Annual General Meeting 2008

Chair's welcome

Chris Mahon of the IUCN UK Executive Committee welcomed everyone to the meeting and to the Prince Albert Suite at the London Zoo. He thanked the Zoological Society of London for hosting the meeting.

Chris noted that, in the absence of a Chair, he was standing in as Chair as a member of the Executive Committee (ExCo). Dr Andy Brown resigned from the Chair in August 2007 due to pressures of other work, after serving as Chair-Elect and Chair for three years. Chris expressed the thanks of the entire UK Committee for the time and effort that Andy had devoted to the role. Chris also noted that the role of Chair remained vacant – an item which would be returned to later in the proceedings.

Committee Annual Review

Chris summarised the Committee's activities over the year. There had been four Executive Committee meetings, all held by teleconference to save travel costs and reduce ExCo's carbon footprint.

- ExCo 49 in March
- ExCo 50 in June
- ExCo 51 in September
- ExCo 52 in November

ExCo intend to return to the practice of having an annual work programme which they will develop following the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona and after the proposed review of the Committee and its functions (covered later on the agenda). This review could be a turning point for the Committee, allowing for reflection on its objectives and strategy.

The Members' meeting scheduled for November '07 at Chester Zoo had had to be postponed and subsequently cancelled due to poor confirmed attendance. Rescheduled for January '08 with a change of venue, the meeting was being combined with the AGM.

One highlight of the year was the meeting with Julia Marton-Lefevre, IUCN Director General, in September 2007 at the WildCRU office of Tubney House in Oxford, where members were able to have good and informal discussions with the new DG. Julia was enthusiastic about the next WCC in Barcelona and the Committee were able to express their concerns that the potential

environmental footprint of the event should be addressed. Chris noted that the UK Committee had written to the Congress Preparatory Committee, following an initiative of Adrian Phillips, to encourage them to take steps to green the event.

Following a suggestion of having a briefing event for parliamentarians on the Countdown 2010 initiative, ExCo have finally received agreement from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Wildlife and Conservation to include the seminar in their forthcoming programme, probably in late Spring 2008. This will be a good opportunity for the Committee to communicate with key decision makers and raise the profile of both the UK Committee and Countdown 2010.

The “Who Pays for Biodiversity?” project is ongoing; the estimated completion date from Paul Morling of the RSPB (who leads on the project and to whom thanks are due) is the end of January 2008. ExCo are now considering further potential projects, with the intention that there is one full project ongoing each year, subject to the proposed review.

ExCo submitted the ‘Wild Living Resources’ report carried out in 2003 to the *EC Call for Evidence on Economics of Biodiversity Loss*. Though the EC may be looking more toward the economic costs of biodiversity loss rather than the value of biodiversity it was felt that as we had done the work it would be sensible to submit it to the process and the EC could decide whether it was useful.

Mike Pienkowski (of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum) continues to provide the link between the UK Committee and developments in the Overseas Territories. Chris noted a forthcoming conference on Reunion, titled “*Islands and the European Union: strategies in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss*” to be held in July 2008.

The UK Committee Secretariat continue to liaise with the membership, service the meetings, keep the new website up to date and act as UK focal point for the Countdown 2010 initiative.

Review of IUCN UK National Committee: its function and objectives

Vin Fleming gave a brief presentation outlining the rationale for, and purpose of, the proposed review. He began by reminding members of the mission statement in the Committee’s constitution, namely: to *‘encourage co-operation among all IUCN members in the UK so as to facilitate their contribution to the programme and governance of IUCN, especially within Europe’*. He also noted the subsidiary objectives of the Committee, abbreviated below:

- to assist IUCN meet its objectives in UK and facilitate the work of members in the UK (if no other appropriate forum);
- to work on issues beyond UK borders in which UK members have legitimate interest;
- to enable UK members to make an effective contribution to IUCN (Council, General Assembly, WCC) including regional events and activities;
- to disseminate IUCN output throughout UK.

The suggestion for a review had arisen from secretariat as it was felt that it was timely to examine the work of the Committee and what the members wanted from it. In particular, a review could ask the following questions of members:

- how well do we perform the tasks identified above?
- is our niche clearly defined?
- are members satisfied with range of activities and outputs of the Committee?
- are these and the secretariat value for money?
- what do members want to see from the Committee in future?
- do we need a UK Committee?

Vin noted that ExCo had discussed proposal for a review in November 2007 (ExCo 52) and had agreed to it in principle subject to endorsement at the AGM, but had recognised the need to focus on preparations for WCC in Barcelona in October 2008. It was suggested that 2008 be used to gather evidence on members' views, which could be reviewed after the Congress and fed into development of a workplan. The review would be done in-house and would probably take the form of a questionnaire distributed by the Secretariat.

Those attending the AGM were invited to comment on the merits or otherwise of the suggested review.

In discussion a review was thought to be a useful exercise in maintaining the relevance of the Committee's work. One suggestion was for the Committee to adopt a modest work programme, continue to stage meetings of substance and act to raise concerns over IUCN activities where necessary. Despite the differences in scale and approach exhibited, it was considered potentially useful to review how other European IUCN Committees operated, this information assisting in a review of the UK Committee's practices. We could then judge how the UK Committee fared in European terms. The UK Committee review would need to be strategic and not focus on specific member-interest issues.

A preface to the questionnaire was suggested, to include a summary of UK Committee projects carried out over the past five years so that respondents were aware of the full range of activities of the Committee. A link to the website should be added. It was also suggested and agreed desirable to complete the review as soon as practical (there was no reason to wait until after the World Congress) and that it should not be done at significant financial cost. In response to questions, Vin noted that it was intended to consult all classes of members who formed part of the IUCN UK family.

Based on the comments received, the AGM agreed to a review proceeding over the coming year.

Report of the 2007 AGM & matters arising

With no matters arising, the report of the 2006 AGM was adopted and is now published on the IUCN-UK website (<http://www.iucn-uk.org/>).

Report of Regional Councillor

With apologies for his absence, this item from Alistair Gammell was cancelled. However, as the AGM had representation from the IUCN Regional Office for Europe (ROfE¹), Chris therefore invited Annika Åkerfelt of the IUCN Regional Office for Europe to introduce herself and update the membership on any items of significance. Annika noted her role as Member Relations Officer at ROfE and her work to ensure that all European IUCN members are kept up to date on those IUCN issues with a regional focus.

Election of Executive Committee for 2008

Thanks were recorded for both Eric Blencowe and Chris Mahon, who were stepping down from ExCo for their services to the UK Committee.

Chris noted that ExCo consists of five elected members and that these are elected annually. These five members consist of one position for the UK government, one for the statutory conservation agencies and three others, usually NGO.

¹ <http://www.iucn.org/places/europe/rofe/>

Chris announced the candidates for election to ExCo for the next year. These are:

- (i) Trevor Salmon (Defra on behalf of the UK Government) – replacing Eric Blencowe
- (ii) Joanna Robertson (Countryside Council for Wales for the country agencies)
- (iii) Stuart Brooks (Scottish Wildlife Trust) – replacing Chris Mahon
- (iv) Martin Spray (Wildfowl & Wetlands trust)
- (v) Mark Huxham (Scottish Wildlife & Countryside Link)

As there were no other candidates, there was no requirement to pursue a formal election process. The attending membership agreed to their appointment by acclamation. The five named above are in post until the 2009 AGM.

Chris reported that ExCo also consisted of two co-opted members who are appointed by the elected ExCo members with regard to having national balance or specific interests. The current co-opted members are:

- (i) Mike Pienkowski – UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum
- (ii) James Robinson – RSPB Northern Ireland.

As a serving Regional Councillor Alistair Gammell has *ex-officio* status on ExCo.

At the AGM it is usual to appoint a Chair-Elect to shadow the incumbent Chair in their final year before taking over the role at the next AGM. However, the UK Committee is in the position of having no Chair and no candidates for the position. The Secretariat has trawled for nominations without success. Traditionally, the role of Chair has alternated between the statutory and non-statutory side (this is not a requirement in the Rules of Operation). Andy Brown, when appointed was Chief Executive of English Nature and his predecessor, Jane Smart, from Plantlife. Ideally, the next Chair should be from the NGO sector.

The membership were invited to consider any potential candidates. The post was not considered onerous beyond the meeting requirements, the Chair being free to determine what level of engagement he or she wished to have.

Vin Fleming then took the floor and announced that Chris Mahon had offered to act as Interim-Chair, but would stand down if another candidate came forward. Brief discussion indicated that while not covered by the Constitution the temporary post of Interim-Chair did provide continuity and leadership during the review and the lead-up to the Barcelona Congress. Support was expressed and the proposal carried. Accordingly, Chris Mahon will act as Interim-Chair of the Committee until such time as a full Chair is nominated.

Financial report from Treasurer

Martin Spray gave the finance report for the UK Committee (**Appendix 1**).

The finances were noted as being in good order with a larger than anticipated carry-over. This was due to the cancelled Members' meeting and no expenditure had been incurred as yet on the *Who Pays?* project. As mentioned above, travel costs have also been reduced through ExCo using teleconferences. ExCo are considering future projects this year, including the Countdown 2010 Parliamentary Seminar. The review might also allow the Committee to focus on potential uses for surplus funds.

Martin thanked the RSPB for once again carrying out an audit.

An observation from the floor noted that the financial records were not for a full year, but only up to January 15th 2008. Altering either the date of the AGM to fall after the end of the financial year

or using a financial year based upon the calendar year were suggested. The Secretariat noted that it would contact the auditor to see if the latter were practical. As a short-term solution the Committee's past end-of-year financial papers would be made available on the website (<http://www.iucn-uk.org/>) but addressing such inconsistencies within the Constitution and Rules of Procedure could also be addressed under the planned review.

Preparations for the Barcelona Congress

In the absence of Alistair Gammell, Vin Fleming gave a brief presentation on the process leading up to the Barcelona Congress. He reminded the Committee of their preparations for the 3rd World Conservation Congress in Bangkok which included:

- a Members' meeting before and after WCC3
 - *Developing a Toolkit for Bangkok* (London, May 2004)
 - *Did we save the Earth in Bangkok?* (Cardiff, December 2004)
- production of *Wealth from the Wild* & UK Committee Congress theme leaflets
- UK Committee evening reception at Queen Sirikit Convention Centre
- Contributed to Sponsor fund for delegates from developing nations

The suggested timetable for Committee preparations for WCC4 (October 2008) was as follows:

- January – AGM initial discussion
- March – ExCo53 – planning discussions
- July – Members' meeting – preparation for the Congress – date to be confirmed and subject to likely availability of papers
- September (date to be confirmed) – meeting of UK delegates to WCC4
- October 5-14th – WCC4 – Barcelona

The Secretariat will determine specific dates for the required meetings and publicise them to the UK Membership.

Vin also provided brief details on the Congress and its theme: *A diverse and sustainable world*

- Stream 1 – *A new climate for change*
- Stream 2 – *Healthy environments – healthy people*
- Stream 3 – *Safeguarding the diversity of life*

Registration for the Congress should begin from January or February 2008. Nominations for Commission Chairs, to Regional Council *etc.* have to be submitted by January 31st 2008

More details can be found at: <http://www.iucn.org/congress/2008/>.

Annika Åkerfelt reported that ROfE was looking to appoint a member of staff as focal point for co-ordination regarding the Barcelona Congress. She noted that all the present Councillors for Western Europe were standing down (including Alistair Gammell). Though not officially announced as yet potential candidates were from Austria, the Netherlands, France, and the Mediterranean and the Nordic countries.

Annika also indicated that the Congress would once again be looking to the more affluent National Committees to sponsor attendees from the poorer Committees. A new Countdown 2010 event has been announced. Called "Sailing to Barcelona" it is hoped that organisations will sponsor or sail a boat to Barcelona to help raise awareness of marine and coastal conservation issues and bring with them 'commitments' to actions in this area.

It was noted that the Congress has two distinct sections; the Congress itself, where Members discuss and vote on IUCN business; and the Forum which features numerous workshops on a diversity of conservation issues.

Literature regarding the IUCN meeting being held on Reunion in July 2008 was available. Titled “*Islands and the European Union – Strategies in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss*”, the meeting plans to bring together representatives from the EU’s seven Outermost Regions and twenty Overseas Territories.

Staging a European landscape Convention event at WCC4

As part of the UK’s involvement with the Congress there are hopes to stage an event promoting the European Landscape Convention (ELC). Richard Partington (Natural England) was invited to provide details on the proposed event.

Richard noted that ten years ago the IUCN had been part of the campaign for the adoption of, what was to become, the ELC, so it was seen as appropriate to hold a learning event on the subject at the Congress. This was being backed by a consortium of the UK country agencies and other organisations. It was reported, however, that due to complications the proposed event might not be able to go ahead in the format intended, but it was hoped that an event could still be held. The Secretariat reported that it was in contact with the Congress Preparatory Committee regarding the availability of conference facilities at the Barcelona venue.

Jim Thompson (Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management) noted that the IEEM were hosting three events in Barcelona, to cover issues such as conservation practitioner skills and professional issues and guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment. It was noted that demand to hold events exceeded supply, it was also difficult to know what other events were being planned with which others could collaborate.

With no further questions or comments, the Chair thanked the participants and closed the AGM.

Appendix I

Financial Records

IUCN UK Committee

ACCOUNT as at January 15th 2008

RECEIPTS

Balance B/F from 06/07		£15,262.22
Member Subscriptions	(to date)	£15,920.00
Bank Interest	For year (to date)	£217.96
TOTAL INCOME		(i) £31,400.18

PAYMENTS

Meeting Expenses	Venue and catering for meeting with IUCN	
	Director-General Julia Marton-Lefèvre	£374.63
	Adrian Phillips ICOMOS expenses	£113.25
	Deposit for 2008 AGM at London Zoo	£1,689.65
Secretariat Contract	1st payment (April 2007 - September 2007)	£5,600.00
	2nd payment (October 2007 - March 2008)	£5,600.00
Bank Charges	For year	£0.00
TOTAL OUTGOINGS		(ii) £13,377.53
BALANCE (i) minus (ii)		(iii) £18,022.65

© IUCN UK National Committee 2008