

## UK COMMITTEE FOR IUCN-UK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2008  
At the Defra office, 55 Whitehall, London NW1 4RY  
1030-1245hrs



**Present:** Chris Mahon, Stuart Brooks, Mike Pienkowski, Joanna Robertson, Trevor Salmon

**In attendance:** Sally Cunningham

**Secretariat:** Vin Fleming and John Henson Webb

**Note:** Due to time constraints imposed by the Members' meeting scheduled to follow ExCo 55, the initial meeting was ended during Item 9. The remaining items were addressed via a teleconference scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### 1. Chair's welcome

CM welcomed the participants to Room 204 of the Defra Office in 55 Whitehall.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alistair Gammell, Mark Huxham, and Martin Spray.

### 3. Minutes of the previous meeting

With no further amendments received, the minutes of ExCo54 were adopted.

### 4. Chair's scene setting

#### • *Chairman's letter to Members*

It was noted that only one response to CM's letter had been received, from Tamas Margeschu, but was seen as a positive initiative despite the lack of feedback from Members. A further response, from Victoria Chester of Plantlife, related to provision of the Secretariat (Item 8). It was suggested that the 'Chair's Page' on the UK Committee website could be used to promote information from the Chair. CM asked whether there was a facility for a 'blog' from the Barcelona Congress?

#### **Action 55.4.1 Secretariat to contact JNCC IT services regarding blog on IUCN-UK website**

It was considered useful to communicate with Members and a periodic, e.g. quarterly, UK Committee Newsletter was suggested. This was to be discussed further under Item 9.

#### • *Feedback from Pan-European National Committee Chairs meeting in Brussels*

CM drew ExCo's attention to the various actions highlighted in his briefing note. Five members per country were to be invited to the evening reception on October 4th. Unfortunately it was noted that the UK Government representatives would not be in Barcelona at that time.

#### **Action 55.4.2 Secretariat to email ? to see who is able to represent UK Committee at WCC evening reception**

It was noted that 100 people were to be invited on the VIP boat trip on October 5th. With no UK Government nominees put forward, CM was the most suitable candidate to attend on behalf of the UK Committee. The Secretariat reported that ROfE had been made aware of the UK evening reception.

#### **Action 55.4.3 Secretariat to remind ROfE of the UK Committee evening reception on October 10th**

CM reported that discussions at the Pan-European Chairs meeting had concluded that IUCN Europe or Gland would contact national committees before getting involved in any specific country issues. There was also a request for greater European funding to reduce IUCN dependence on contract money and the Dutch Committee Chair was to draft a discussion paper. TS registered a note of caution over this, citing the need to avoid diverting funds away from existing priorities.

A number of UK organisations are listed on the IUCN Recission List, relating to unpaid dues to the global IUCN. If not paid during Congress organisations on the list will be removed from the IUCN Members Directory. Of the UK organisations listed Frontier is a UK Committee member and, though their UK subscription payment has been received, it can not be processed if they are going to be removed from the international IUCN members directory. Several other organisations are previous members of the UK Committee (except Greenforce), but no longer subscribe. The Secretariat were

asked to determine whether these organisations still exist or not check and then discuss with the Constituency Support Unit how best to pursue this.

**Action 55.4.4 Secretariat to contact IUCN CSU regarding UK organisations on Recission List**

With regard to the issue of supporting tax exemption for the IUCN, the Secretariat were asked to contact CSU to determine the details of the proposal and bring these before the next ExCo meeting. The UK Government position would be to encourage the Swiss to consider the situation and scrutinise any suggestions. This was to be discussed with the Dutch Committee regarding a possible joint position statement.

**Action 55.4.5 Secretariat to contact CSU to request position statement on IUCN tax exemption proposal**

Volunteer helpers are required to assist non-European delegates to the Barcelona Congress and man a help-desk. Potentially this could prove to be a full-time job!

**Action 55.4.6 Secretariat to inform attending UK members of volunteer opportunity at Barcelona Congress**

CM noted that the pan-European National Committee Chairs meeting was a useful networking opportunity with potential. However, the last meeting was in June 2007, regarding the Pan-European Programme), little progress had been made thus far. SB asked whether CM was able to represent a UK Committee view at these meetings? CM noted that there hadn't been the option for achieving this. TS suggested that in preparation for any future meetings ExCo could arrange a teleconference pre-meeting to discuss the issues and agree on a position for the Chair to take forward.

**5. 4th World Conservation Congress in Barcelona**

• ***Preparatory discussion for second Members' meeting***

In discussion the disappointing level of member participation was noted. It was decided, therefore, that after the Chair's introduction, TS would provide an update on the UK Government position on the various Motions, indicating those issues which are either a High, Medium or Low priority. Any particular Motions raised from the floor could be discussed. Members could also be invited to provide further information on particular Motions either direct to TS and SC or via the Secretariat, so as to avoid stalling the meeting with minor details relating to specific Motions. SC would introduce the composition of the UK Government delegation.

CM asked whether support would be given to any Motion put forward by a UK member? TS noted that it would be useful to have membership explain the background to their Motions, which in turn could inform the UK Government understanding of the issues involved. Consolidation of Motions was raised and it was noted that the existing total of 125 Motions was after consolidation had occurred, so all Motions now required a vote. Some could be referred to external hearings and sub-groups if required, but that would happen during the Assembly phase of the Congress. In discussion ExCo agreed that the governance Motions being put forward were all reasonable with the Motion to strengthen ROfE being a positive step. It was recognised that some Motions were of greater relevance to the UK than others and those that had some tie-in to the Pan-European Work Programme could help determine a future work programme for the UK Committee.

• ***UK Committee reception / Who Pays? launch / venue / costs etc***

CM noted that his final expenses would also include the cost of his hotel and food; the Secretariat indicated that the invoice from Status Design should be less than originally indicated as some of the quoted work had been carried out by the Secretariat.

Regarding the UK Committee reception, it was noted that the venue was free, with the cost relating to the provision of refreshments. In discussion several issues were noted as requiring actions.

**Action 55.5.1 Secretariat to alter invitations to note reception timing as 1900 – 2100 (from 2200)**

**Action 55.5.2 ExCo to send Secretariat images considered suitable for PowerPoint presentation**

**Action 55.5.3 Secretariat to provide UK delegates with 250 invitation cards for use in Barcelona**

**Action 55.5.4 Secretariat to circulate reception invitation list to ExCo for immediate comment/amendment**

**Action 55.5.5 Secretariat to augment revised reception invitation list with further UK members attending Congress when known**

## 6. UK Overseas Territories

- **Feedback from Reunion conference**

MP tabled a paper on the Reunion conference for subsequent circulation to ExCo.

### **Action 55.6.1 Secretariat to circulate UKOTCF Reunion conference paper to ExCo**

MP noted that though the conference had been disorganised, and at times chaotic, it was also very useful. The conference had been 'adopted' by the French EU Presidency and an attending French minister had spoken on various subjects, including the need to remember biodiversity when considering climate change. There was also EC support for encouraging a voluntary approach in OTs for species and habitat protection, for example based on Natura 2000, backed by EU financing. Input from the UK Government was low key, Eric Blencowe being the single UK Government representative. Eric offered to relay any messages to other UK Government departments on behalf of the delegates. A future meeting may be held in 2 to 3 years, possibly hosted on the Canary Islands.

MP reported that several members of the Bioverseas initiative (of umbrella NGOs and some IUCN bodies for Overseas Territories of France, the Netherlands and UK) had become concerned that ROfE appeared to have dropped its role as Secretariat to Bioverseas without announcing this. The conference preparation had obviously been a busy time for ROfE. However, the future of Bioverseas needed to be determined by the partners, rather than changes in the body that provides the secretariat. In consequence MP had written a letter to the other partner organisations to discuss the way forward and to decide whether they wished to continue Bioverseas and, if so, the way of operating this. This meeting was expected to take place later in the year.

MP reported on several key issues relating to OTs, including an enquiry, established at the recommendation on a House of Commons Select Committee, into alleged government corruption in the Turks and Caicos Islands; this could have major positive consequences for the environment. TCI was currently suffering severe disruption due to two hurricanes in a single week. MP was to visit shortly. MP also noted that two Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention had been prepared by Tristan da Cunha for designation by UK. These were seen as important particularly given the forthcoming Ramsar CoP.

## 7. Future Parliamentary Seminars

- **Subject areas / opportunities**

MP noted that potential subject areas for Westminster Hall debates were UKOTs and/or sharks and that he had briefed contacts at the Wildlife Trusts and had discussions with some UK Government officials. The considered opinion of UKOTCF's Council for a debate on OTs was that it should be treated as an 'environmental' topics rather than a 'foreign affairs' topics which had been the assumption of the Wildlife Trust's Secretariat. TS noted that the latter might achieve a better response from FCO, who have the policy lead, even though the topic is environmental. It was felt useful for MP and TS to discuss the matter further. SH also offered to speak with the Wildlife Trust Secretariat if that would be useful.

### **Action 55.7.1 MP or a UKOTCF colleague would discuss with TS, CM and others regarding the possible Westminster House debate and report back to ExCo**

### **Action 55.7.2 ExCo to consider other seminar topics and opportunities for future discussion**

## 8. Secretariat Report and contract renewal

- **Tender document**

ExCo discussed the tender document. It was recognised that stating a requirement for 'technical' input might limit the number of potential applicants and increase costs considerably. If technical support was excluded from the initial tender ExCo would need to address this at a later date.

CM noted that there had already been expressions of interest from two UK member organisations. The current 60 day termination of agreement was considered to be short and three months was suggested. The issue of future JNCC involvement was also raised.

In the re-draft of the tender it was decided to specify the current time commitment required under section 3.1; specify in section 8 of how applicants should breakdown their time and costs (and invite support / contribution in kind) and ask for organisational c.v's. There would be an open invitation to tender, but those organisations considered to be potential Secretariats would also be targeted. It was hoped to go out to tender by early October

**Action 55.8.1 Secretariat to re-draft tender and circulate to ExCo for comment and amendment**  
**Action 55.8.2 JNCC (VF) and CCW (JR) to discuss future JNCC involvement with IUCN-UK regarding technical advice**

## **9. UK Committee Review**

- **Feedback from membership questionnaire**

The Secretariat noted that the collated numeric and text feedback was from only 41 IUCN UK members, with over 50% of the responses coming from IUCN Commission members. The feedback had been provided on the UK Committee website and further comments were invited – none had been received so far. CM noted that it was easy to over-analyse the mostly ambivalent results received through the questionnaire, but they could help focus on a potential UK Committee work programme / strategy.

- **IUCN European programme of work**

It was recognised that the European strategy was not widely utilised and that there was no reporting on outcomes from the 2005-2008 period when the programme for 2009-2012 was drafted. SB noted the ambivalence in the feedback on the questionnaire over the questions of why the UK Committee existed and what it was there to do. He considered that the European strategy added a further layer of confusion, especially to Commission members who had a specific focus. In discussion it was suggested that the European programme be used only as a guide when drafting the UK Committee work programme.

The European Strategy had only received seven responses in two rounds of consultation and TS drew attention to the level of member apathy in both the UK Committee feedback questionnaire and in responses to European strategy; neither provided a strong base on which to build the UK Committee work programme. Consideration needed to be given to what the UK Committee could usefully achieve in support of the global IUCN programme. It had no powers to set policy, but could act to exchange and disseminate information, nationally and regionally through mutual projects with other national committees.

The concept of a UK Committee strategy was agreed and CM would provide a brief focus document for future discussion.

**Action 55.9.1 CM to draft strategy document and circulate to ExCo for consideration**

**Action 55.9.2 CM to contact Willem Ferwerda regarding potential talk for ExCo**

**Action 55.9.3 Secretariat to put UK Committee Strategy on agenda for ExCo 56**

Minutes of the *continuation* of the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 via teleconference

**Present:** Chris Mahon, Sally Cunningham, Mike Pienkowski, James Robinson (JRo)

**Apologies:** Stuart Brooks, Vin Fleming, John Henson Webb, Joanna Robertson, Trevor Salmon

## **9. UK Committee Review *continued***

- **Next steps**

- **Draft UK Committee 2009 - 2012 strategy**
- **Draft communications strategy**

- **Future projects**

It was agreed that this item had been discussed at the previous meeting and Chris Mahon had agreed to work up a draft UK Committee strategy for 2009-2012 for discussion by ExCo members.

## **10. Review of Committee Constitution and Rules of Operation**

In discussion it was agreed that this was discussed at the last meeting and that ExCo agreed the recommendations in Doc 55.8 Annex 1.

**Action 55.10.1 Secretariat to redraft UK Committee Constitution and Rules of Operation for membership consideration and vote at the 2009 Annual General Meeting**

- **Resignation of Martin Spray**

CM explained that essentially due to a heavy workload Martin had offered to stand down from the Committee. CM had accepted his resignation with regret and was now informing other ExCo members. A replacement will need to be considered in due course.

- **ExCo nominations**

There had been some discussion of country agency representation at the previous meeting and the future involvement of JNCC once they step down from their Secretariat role. CM will discuss this with CCW and JNCC. SB had told CM that he would like to see a continued JNCC presence on the Committee. SC asked whether MP would be staying on as a co-opted member to continue representing OT interests as Defra found this beneficial.

- **2009 AGM**

There was some discussion about moving the AGM to later in the year but it was clarified that this could only take effect **after** the next AGM so there is still one scheduled for January 2009. SC suggested it should include a wash up session from Barcelona. There was some discussion regarding staging an ExCo on the same day, as twice issues of timing have caused an abrupt halt to proceedings. It was agreed that it was beneficial for those travelling some distance (e.g. from Northern Ireland) and that consideration should be given to amending the timings to allow for ExCo meetings to run longer. There was some discussion on venue and it was agreed that although London proves the most popular location for most the UK Committee should stage meetings elsewhere. SC offered to look at rooms available at Defra in Bristol between 12<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2009. Failing that a London venue would be considered.

**Action 55.10.2 ExCo members to contact Secretariat with their availability between 12<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> January 2009**

## **11. Countdown 2010 Focal Point activities**

- **Potential Private Sector contacts**

SB suggested that there was a gap with regards to the travel and leisure industry and that perhaps someone could identify a federation or umbrella organisation to target.

**Action 55.11.1 SB to contact Defra Recreation departments for relevant contacts**

- **Private Sector contacts letter**

It was suggested that the letter would benefit from being shorter and more punchy to grab attention. Background on Countdown 2010 could be included in an attachment and it was also agreed that the benefits of involved should be highlighted too.

**Action 55.11.2 CM to assist Secretariat in amending Private Sector contact letter**

## **12. Actions and matters arising from the previous meeting**

It was agreed that most actions had been dealt with.

- **Finance update and arrangements for alternative Treasurer**

The accounts were accepted as written. CM asked for a volunteer for Treasurer. With no offers forthcoming he reported that SB had previously indicated his willingness. This nomination was seconded by MP and accepted.

- **Policy for ExCo communications to Government**

It was agreed to defer this item to an email exchange following the meeting. CM would chase up the Andy Brown letter for a form of words to use.

**Action 55.12.1 CM to contact Secretariat regarding Andy Brown OT's letter**

## **13. AoB**

There were no other items of business.

## **14. Dates and topics of future meetings**

- **Friday 21st November – ExCo 56 (teleconference)**

**Action 55.14.1 ExCo to confirm availability for ExCo 56 with Secretariat**

- **Dates for 2009**

**Action 55.14.2 ExCo to let the Secretariat know their availability during 2009**