

UK COMMITTEE FOR IUCN-UK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 52nd meeting held on 22 November 2007

Via Teleconference

1400-1610hrs

Present: Alistair Gammell, Joanna Robertson (JoR), James Robinson (JaR), Mike Pienkowski, Trevor Salmon (& Sally Cunningham & Mark Baxter as observers)

In attendance: Vin Fleming (Secretariat)

1. Chair's welcome

In the continued absence of a chair, VF welcomed all participants especially James Robinson (RSPB, Northern Ireland), as a newly co-opted member, and Trevor Salmon as the new Defra representative on ExCo. TS explained that IUCN now fell under his responsibility following a number of changes within Defra. Mark Baxter and Sally Cunningham, with responsibility for elements of IUCN work, joined the meeting as observers. It was agreed that VF would guide ExCo through the agenda but it was noted that the absence of provision in the constitution / rules of procedure for a formal vice-chair may need to be addressed at the AGM.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Martin Spray, Mark Huxham & John Henson-Webb (Secretariat). Secretariat owe an apology to Chris Mahon whom we had been unable to contact prior to the meeting but who was waiting patiently (but unsuccessfully) to be contacted for the telecom.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

JoR noted that her comments had been taken on board. With no further comments the minutes of ExCo51 were adopted.

4. Discussion on business topics

Countdown 2010 Parliamentary seminar

VF noted the positive news that the All-Party Parliamentary group on Wildlife & Conservation had agreed that they would welcome an IUCN seminar on Countdown 2010 in their 2008 programme, probably in February. Details have yet to be agreed but VF noted thanks for her assistance were due to Hazel Phillips of the Wildlife Trusts in her capacity as secretary to the parliamentary group. Discussion then followed on the content of the programme noting that it was important to get key messages across, that we would have a limited amount of time to do so (< one hour) and those present would be very busy. It was agreed that we ought to have a maximum of four presentations aiming at 5 minutes maximum with time for discussion thereafter. It would be important to assess our progress towards 2010 (both good and bad) and to what might follow it. A number of candidate speakers were suggested. Based on discussion, VF would revise the draft agenda with ExCo needing to suggest those they were felt were best able to deliver the key messages.

Action 52.4.1. Secretariat to revise the agenda for the parliamentary seminar and circulate to ExCo for their comments, suggestions and revisions

5. Members' meeting & AGM

The Secretariat gave ExCo two dates for an AG and (postponed) Members' meeting in January at Chester Zoo. Of the two dates, the 23rd was preferred even though all members could not make it. It was queried whether we were likely to get good attendance at Chester compared with meetings held at other locations (London, Cambridge & Edinburgh traditionally get the larger audiences). Other views were that Chester remained a good venue and that we may have postponed the autumn meeting prematurely. It was suggested that secretariat put an email round the membership to canvass views, without prejudice, as to the numbers likely to attend a Chester venue and then to make any final decision.

Secretariat noted with regret that one of the key speakers, Roy Dennis, would probably not be available to speak in January. With no suggestions for a replacement, it was felt that the time could be allocated earlier in the programme to beginning the preparations for the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona. Accordingly, it was suggested that a slot for AG to update members on the process and early deadline for the WCC would be valuable. AG noted that some deadlines, such as proposing nominations for Regional Councillors for Europe (AG's tenure terminates at Barcelona), are early next year (February). A suggestion for a member of ExCo to chair the meeting was made.

Action 52.5.1. Secretariat to email the membership to canvass likely attendance at an AGM / members meeting in Chester in January and to assess other preferred options

Action 52.5.2. Secretariat to revise the members' meeting agenda to provide a slot for preparation for Barcelona.

Action 52.5.3. AG to provide Secretariat, for further dissemination to the membership, with any early deadlines for Barcelona processes (especially nominations for elections).

6. New Chair

VF reported that this issue had been discussed by the Chief Executives of the Country Agencies at their meeting on the previous day. Whilst they had suggested a possible candidate who might be approached, they had no other suggestions but felt it was appropriate the chair should pass to the non-statutory side. Various options for people who might be approached were discussed. However, in the absence of any candidate putting themselves forward it was agreed that Secretariat should circulate a nominations form to all subscribing members.

Action 52.6.1. Secretariat to circulate a nominations form for a UK Committee Chair to all subscribing members

7. Preparations for WCC4 in Barcelona

WCC preparation. Secretariat outlined the preparations that had preceded the Bangkok WCC noting that, in addition to the activities outlined in the document, there had also been a members' meeting 'Developing a toolkit for Bangkok' in May 2004. Discussion was combined with agenda item 16 on dates of future meetings. As noted above it was agreed that the AGM should begin preparations for the WCC. Debate then focused on whether a members' meeting would be most profitable in June or July (by which time papers might be starting to appear for the Congress) or whether this was best held in September immediately preceding the Congress. Ultimately it was agreed that we would begin preparations at the January members' meetings, discuss further preparation for the WCC at the March ExCo teleconference, and aim to hold a members' meeting in July (probably) at a date that would enable papers for the WCC to be available (but before the main August holiday period). There would then be the option of holding a meeting of UK delegates to the WCC in September immediately before the Congress as well as an ExCo.

Greening the Congress. The responses from other IUCN national committees were noted even though these were not very productive. Nevertheless, AG noted that the UK Committee's comments on greening had fallen upon receptive ears and were being taken up by the organising committee. For example, rail timetables would be published and delegates were being encouraged to get documents electronically at the congress, even though the logistics of some of these issues had yet to be worked out. In all, ExCo felt the UK Committee had done its bit in being the first to push this item and get it on the agenda. JoR asked that we continue to push the idea of sustainable foods, such as fish, whilst recognising that organisers often do not have control over, say, catering at conference venues. Secretariat would raise with Purificació Canals (contact details from AG if needed).

8. Re-instatement of UK Committee workplan.

VF introduced this document from secretariat. It was agreed that a workplan was desirable even though this should be a relatively light touch. JaR noted that such a plan would be helpful for new recruits to the Committee and also aid continuity when there was turnover within ExCo. However, ExCo also felt that the immediate priorities for the year ahead were to complete the various business items and to prepare for the WCC. The direction set at the latter might also influence the direction of the UK Committee work. It was agreed that we should plan to formulate a 3 year workplan (2009-12) at the November 2008 ExCo based on the IUCN European programme. In the meantime it would be desirable to have tabulated our results and achievements to date against the themes and structure of the draft European regional workplan.

Action 52.8.1. Secretariat to tabulate current UK Committee achievements against the European work programme thematic priorities

Action 52.8.2. Secretariat to ensure the 2009-12 workplan is placed on the ExCo agenda for November 2008.

9. IUCN European Programme 2009-12

JoR noted the latest consultation on the draft work programme for IUCN Pan-European Programme and that the deadline for providing comments was 30th November. Regardless of whether members wished to comment or not the document was worth taking the time to read; the plan had continued to improve from earlier versions.

Action 52.9.1. Secretariat to circulate the consultation email on the European IUCN work programme in time to enable members to comment by 30th November deadline.

10. Giant's Causeway

VF gave the background to this item (concerns expressed by the National trust and others regarding development adjoining this World Heritage Site) noting that ExCo had been asked for their support on previous occasions. JaR noted that this issue was politically sensitive in Northern Ireland and that any action by ExCo might compromise some of its members. MP and AG noted that there had been previous occasions where ExCo had written to governments excluding their government and agency members from their comments. It was also felt that it was not unreasonable for ExCo to express its interest in how the interest of a World Heritage Site might be maintained in good condition. Ultimately it was agreed that an informal intra-government approach from TS to counterparts in the Northern Irish government might be the best approach to determine what the current situation was and to report back to the next ExCo.

Action 52.10.1. TS to contact counterparts in the Northern Irish government about developments potentially affecting the Giant's Causeway and to report back to ExCo 53.

11. Overseas Territories

MP gave a report on matters regarding the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. MP noted the next OT conference would be held on the Cayman Islands from 30 May-6 June 2009. The OT Consultative Council (a meeting of OT and UK Government ministers takes place in late November when progress against the Environment Charters will be on the agenda. There is a conference to be held on the island of reunion in July (8-12th?) 2008 on '*Islands and the European Union: strategies in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss*'. MP noted he was participating from the Turks & Caicos Islands where, at a recent conference, the TCI government had made a commitment to greening their policy.

Action 52.11.1. Secretariat to circulate details of the conference to members once more details known.

12. Countdown 2010 Focal Point activities

In JHW's absence there was little to report other than to note that Twycross Zoo had supported the 2010 declaration. Secretariat will continue to target member organisations to encourage their support of the declaration.

13. Actions and matters arising

The issue was raised of what progress had been made with the event at the WCC on the European Landscape Convention. Whilst Natural England was driving the issue the UK as a whole is a signatory so other countries within the Union may also wish to become involved. It was suggested that the January meeting may provide a useful opportunity for NE to canvass support for an event at WCC in Barcelona.

Action 52.13.1. Secretariat to contact Richard Partington (NE) to check on any progress with the suggestion of an ELC event at WCC4 and to suggest raising this at the January Members' meeting.

Finance. VF noted that the Committee finances were in good order and there was scope for Committee spend if desired. A number of options were considered, including seeing if any finance would assist Paul Morling complete the '*Who pays?*' project. TS and JaR asked for further details of this project and JoR asked if the cost of the new BAP priorities had been included in the '*Who Pays?*' work. AG offered to check on these points (without prejudice to any ExCo decision). It was agreed that any spend should be carefully considered and fit within the objectives of the Committee. ExCo would consider options.

Action 52.13.2. AG to consult with Paul Morling to determine whether funds would help to conclude the Who Pays project and whether UKBAP costings were included in the work.

Action 52.13.3. ExCo to consider possible topics which the Committee might support financially.

14. Secretariat update.

Most items for the Secretariat update were covered on the agenda.

15. Any other business

Review of working of the UK Committee

VF introduced the document and the rationale behind it. He also added comments from Mark Huxham, in his absence, noting the unique nature of the UK Committee and the valuable output it had achieved but also that it had struggled at times to make an impact with members. Any review could focus on our key medium term goals (and thus cross-link with the agenda item on a work programme). In discussion it was agreed that this was a useful thing to do but, like the work programme, it was probably done better after Barcelona. Having said that, it would make sense to gather the necessary evidence and views over the coming year and wrap up the review asap after Barcelona. JoR noted that we should take note of the role of other fora (e.g. UKBAP standing committee) in terms of the UK Committee niche. It was agreed that we should announce an intended review with draft terms of reference at the AGM for the views of the membership and then begin to gather evidence over the next year.

Action 52.15.1. Secretariat to include suggested review in business for the January AGM.

EC call for evidence on economics of biodiversity loss

Secretariat drew attention of ExCo to this call for evidence and suggested that the UK Committee work on *Wealth from the Wild* might be appropriate to submit. In discussion it was suggested that the EC may be more after the economics costs of losing biodiversity rather than the value of biodiversity as it stands but on the whole 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 if it was useful or not.

Action 52.15.2. Secretariat to submit UK Committee *Wealth from the Wild* publication to the EC call for evidence.