

UK COMMITTEE FOR IUCN-UK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 54th meeting held on 23rd June 2008
At the Darwin Room, London Zoo, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY
1100-1330hrs



Present: Chris Mahon (Chair), Stuart Brooks, Alistair Gammell, Mike Pienkowski, Joanna Robertson, Trevor Salmon
In attendance: Sally Cunningham; Susanna Söderström (membership officer, IUCN Gland) was present for part of the meeting
Secretariat: Vin Fleming and John Henson Webb

1. Chair's welcome

CM welcomed the participants to Zoological Society of London at its home in Regent's Park.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mark Huxham, James Robinson and Martin Spray.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

With no further amendments received, the minutes of ExCo53 were adopted.

3A. Feedback from Parliamentary Seminar

It was recognised that, despite logistical problems due to arrangements being made through a second organisation, the seminar had achieved as much as could be expected, had had a reasonable turnout of parliamentarians and had opened the door to future events. However, the Committee might have made more of the public relations opportunity the event provided and this should be considered in advance at any future events. Further opportunities, such as a second seminar on Who Pays? and potential Westminster Hall debates should be exploited to raise awareness of IUCN issues, hopefully to a larger audience. The recent reception hosted at Parliament by BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) was cited as an example of a well-attended event, with approximately 120 people taking part. The UK Committee could consider hosting a similar event through a sympathetic parliamentarian. However, imparting any meaningful information at a reception was seen as difficult, so the nature of the event should match its objectives.

Action 54.3A.1 ExCo to consider opportunities for future UK Committee Parliamentary seminars and/or receptions and circulate suggestions

Action 54.3A.2 Secretariat to add the topic to the next ExCo agenda

4. ExCo – means of working - EAC

With reference to the email circulated by CM, ExCo discussed the circumstances of the EAC consultation and what should ExCo do, on behalf of the UK Committee, should a similar situation arise in the future? Was there an expectation that the UK Committee would respond?

TS noted that the UK Government would be expected to provide evidence directly to such consultations, as it did in this instance. Aside from any potential time constraints, it was recognised that collating views and submissions from the full membership (and agreeing any common line) could be a difficult task, but should not be ruled out.

In discussion it was suggested that ExCo (through the Secretariat) should alert UK members to consultations, indicating that ExCo will not be replying on their behalf and drawing members attention to any IUCN information that might be relevant to their considerations. Appropriate contacts at both ROfE and Gland should be informed, as those offices were also perceived as external stakeholders and may have appropriate evidence that they might wish to submit independently. It was also understood that, as has occurred previously, there may be circumstances (for example, a comment on Government policy) when it is not appropriate for all members of ExCo to comment but where the non-Government members of ExCo wish to do so. This situation had arisen before when ExCo had written to Government about the Overseas Territories but the letter had made it plain that the views expressed did not seek to include those of the government or statutory representatives on the Committee. Therefore it was considered useful for ExCo to agree a form of wording to be used on letters/emails when such situations occur.

Action 54.4.1 Secretariat to circulate Andy Brown's letter to UK Government relating to OTs as example of possible wording

Action 54.4.2 Secretariat to draft ExCo policy paper to incorporate points discussed above

Action 54.4.3 Secretariat to ensure that IUCN-UK distribution list includes ROfE/Gland contacts

5. 4th World Conservation Congress in Barcelona

• *Preparatory discussion for Members' meeting*

ExCo discussed the agenda of the Members' meeting and noted the content of their individual presentations. The main issues were how could the UK Committee assist its Members in preparing for the Congress and what 'added value' could be provided in Barcelona.

It was agreed that the Members would be asked to indicate the top five or ten issues they perceived as being of importance to the UK, with future discussion on how these could be supported/addressed, such as presenting proxy votes on behalf of those members not attending.

TS noted that the UK Government delegation would find a contact list of those UK Members attending the Congress useful, potentially as scientific support should the need arise.

The UK Committee reception, planned for October 10th at the Sagrada Familia Hotel (attached to the Congress venue) to run from 1900 to 2200, would use the *Who Pays?* report as its theme and provide a networking opportunity for UK members. Reception invitations could be distributed by those ExCo members attending Barcelona, but a targeted invitation list would be drawn-up, with those individuals receiving invitations in advance. It was agreed that UK IUCN members would be given the opportunity to display their work at the reception, as a showcase for UK conservation efforts, but they would be responsible for transporting any items to and from the reception venue. The suggestion of hiring a booth at Barcelona was discussed but rejected as unfeasible, as neither the manpower required nor content would be available.

Discussion was given to the format for both the reception invitation and the *Who Pays?* report. It was suggested that the invitation could be either credit card or business card sized and that, in keeping with the call to 'Green the Congress', the *Who Pays?* report would be offered on either a CD or a USB memory stick¹. Depending on cost, if space were available in either format, UK members would be offered the opportunity, as with the reception, to provide details of their conservation efforts in the UK. There would be a strict maximum file size and deadline for member content.

Action 54.5.1 Secretariat to cost production of Who Pays? report on 500 units of both CD and USB memory stick

Action 54.5.2 Secretariat to cost production of business card invitations

Action 54.5.3 Secretariat to draft invitations list (election candidates / European Committee Chairs / RofE staff / European Commission and Presidency members)

6. UK Overseas Territories

MP noted that IUCN conference on "*The European Union and its Overseas Entities*" would be held on Reunion from the 7th and 12th July. The next UK Overseas Territories conference was scheduled for June 2009 and was to be held in the Cayman Islands – details will be on the UKOTCF website shortly (<http://www.ukotcf.org/>).

MP reported growing concern over Caribbean OTs. On Grand Cayman there is the good news that local protest over road building in native forest has led to a halting of this, but the bad news of recent intentional killing of (the endemic and critically endangered) blue iguanas in the captive breeding programme. Bermuda has seen planning regulations being bypassed to allow for development in sensitive areas, though Cooper Island, a former US space-tracking facility has now been designated a National Park, adjacent to islands where progress is being made in the restoration of the Bermuda Petrel. The largest number of problems at present are in the Turks & Caicos Islands, where it is reported that the Premier has over-ruled local planning laws and bodies to allow major land developments. Huge developments are in place or proposed in virtually all the islands, in most cases without local consultation or environmental impact assessments. There are many reports of intimidation of the public, and concern has been expressed in hearings of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee that this should be happening on British territory. Local citizens are calling for UK Government to intervene, as the latter are ultimately responsible for good governance. In a majority of cases, statutory protected areas or sites proposed for that and international status are being impacted, without due process.

The UK Government has raised claims on an number of sea areas around the South Atlantic, but the focus would seem to be on mineral resources rather than conservation of marine resources, which remains wanting in several cases.

AG noted that RSPB had some concerns regarding FCO/Defra/DCMS/DfID, and a perceived lack of a responsibility on biodiversity in the OTs. MP noted that this topic had been addressed in UKOTCF's submission to the current inquiry by the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee.

¹ Linking invitations to CD/Memory Stick

7. Secretariat Report and contract renewal

It was reiterated that the contract between JNCC and the UK Committee for provision of Secretariat services expires on 31st March 2009, and ExCo were reminded that they needed to consider the tender process.

Action 54.7.1 Secretariat + Chair to draft IUCN-UK Secretariat tender specification

8. UK Committee Review

- ***Feedback from membership questionnaire***

From initial discussion of the non-text-based Questionnaire responses it was considered that the message thus far was somewhat negative. The majority of responses were from IUCN Commission members. It was suggested that the analysis should distinguish between subscribing and non-subscribing members and that some individuals could be approached directly.

The questions on page five (numbered 9 and 10) were seen as the most fundamental but had received an ambiguous response. It raised a further question of whether the UK Committee still had a role to play. The free text responses to questions were considered to be vital and these should be extracted and circulated to ExCo within 1-2 weeks. The full results would be made available by the end of July via the website.

Action 54.8.1 Secretariat to provide collated text responses to ExCo by 7th July

9. IUCN European Work Programme

AG noted that the consultation on the Work Programme was now complete. It had been a difficult process and with no financial support, had been restricted to a web consultation. Feedback on the process had been limited. A two-page summary document would go before a meeting of National Committee Chairs being held in September 2008 (probably in Brussels), and the Programme must be adopted at WCC4 in Barcelona. Comments were welcome in the run-up to production of the two page summary. AG stated that a future Pan-European forum is proposed to enable the membership to have more influence over development of the programme. TS noted similarities to the Bern Pan-European Network and that the IUCN must avoid duplication of effort.

AG further noted that the European Programme had to be compatible with the IUCN global programme to be adopted at WCC4 (the latter is now available on the web). There would also be developments through the programme to enable members/Commissions better influence throughout the organisation.

10. Review of Committee Constitution and Rules of Operation

With little time to discuss the paper in detail, it was suggested that ExCo members provide written comments on the suggestions made by Secretariat for any modifications to the Constitution and/or Rules of Procedure.

Action 54.10.1 ExCo to provide written comments on Paper 54.5 by 18 July

11. Countdown 2010 Focal Point activities

Not recorded.

11. Actions and matters arising from the previous meeting

Time limitations did not enable this item to be discussed in full.

Action 54.11.1 ExCo to provide written comments on Paper 54.6 by 18 July

12. AoB

A further greening issue relating to WCC4 was raised by a member - the provision of the Barcelona documents as paper copies sent by mail when the member had asked for electronic copies. SS noted that those attending Barcelona could opt out of paper mailing if they wished and receive / download electronic versions only – this facility was available for all IUCN mailings. The particular query was passed to SS to deal with the concerns directly.

Action 54.12.1 Secretariat to send email to membership regarding 'opt out' for Congress papers

13. Dates of future meetings

- Friday 19th September – ExCo 55 and 2nd Pre-Congress Members' meeting (venue to be arranged)
- Friday 21st November – ExCo 56 – teleconference