

DRAFT
Peatlands Biodiversity Delivery Group Meeting
Thursday 30th April 2009
Glenwhirry Hill Farm

Attendees

Laverne Bell	(QPA)
Larry Toal	(NIEA – NH)
Bob Davidson	(NIEA – NH)
Billy McCabe	(Planning)
Martin Bradley	(NIEA – NH)
Claire McGrath	(NIEA – NH)
Catherine Bertrand	(Mourne Heritage Trust)
Roy Tomlinson	(QUB)
Jim McAdam	(AFBI)
Richard Weyl	(NIEA – NH - Chair)
Dermott Hughes	(CNCC)
Melanie Flexen	(AFBI)
Helen Paul	(NIEA – NH – Minute Taker)

1. Introduction

Richard welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced and thanked Roy Tomlinson for attending and agreeing to join the group.

2. Apologies

John Hetherington (ConFor), Godfrey McRoberts (CMB), Michael Meharg (NIEA), Andrew Upton (UWT), James Robinson (RSPB)

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

Richard informed the group that there was the potential for a PhD for TELLUS which could be sponsored under the Intereg IV programme. Roy informed the group that they were running a Pilot over the summer.

Richard mentioned the Habitat Restoration Network group had now become established. Information on this group will be circulated to the Biodiversity Delivery Groups.

Laverne informed the group that there was a new contact for the NI Archeological Forum and that she would provide details.

Action Point 1: Laverne to provide new contact details for the NIAF.

5. Work Programme

Richard informed the group that the work programme had been updated to include some comments made and had been published on the website at the end of March. He pointed out that it wasn't set in stone and that it could be amended/updated at any time. Martin had updated the comments section for NIEA but stressed that he was reliant on members of the group to provide information on various tasks they were completing.

Richard asked for any comments on the work programme.

3.13 - Claire suggested PEPG be included in the Partners section.

3.14 – Billy informed the group that he would be able to send some information on mineral development.

Action Point 2: Billy to send information on mineral development to the group.

3.19 – It was suggested that Peat Extraction could go under ROMPS process which was likely to kick in next year. Billy agreed to provide a form of wording on ROMPS.

Action Point 3: Billy to provide wording on ROMPS to Richard/Martin.

3.18 - It was agreed to remove the words 'for fuel'

3.2 – Agri-environment scheme monitoring programme – Catherine mentioned that the issue of uptake of agri-environment schemes on land under multiple ownership needed to be addressed.

Action point 4: Richard to speak to Godfrey

3.6 – Laverne asked if the group were going to reply to the River Basin Management Plans consultation paper. Richard informed the group that it would be up to individuals to respond. Bob pointed out that the 1st round of the Plans just picked out the obvious issues and it was hoped that the 2nd round would be more proactive.

3.7 – Dermot felt that agri-environment schemes should be included and that cross references should be made where appropriate

4 – Peat Use and Alternatives

A discussion took place and it was suggested that a workshop could be held early in 2010. This workshop could be used to pull together what we know, to

encourage everyone to do more and to make recommendations. Initially this should be

Action point 5: Richard to talk to PEPG and to investigate a 'peat use in government workshop' which would be held in early 2010.

Dermot agreed to resubmit his comments on the work programme.

Action Point 6: Dermot to resubmit the comments he made on the work programme.

6. Membership

Richard informed the group that the Terms of Reference and membership of the group would need to be reviewed. Richard agreed to review attendance of the meetings and speak to key people.

Action Point 7: Richard to add TOR & membership to the agenda for the next meeting.

Action Point 8: Richard to review attendance and speak to key people.

7. Wind Farms

Claire McGrath gave a presentation on wind farms. She informed the group that currently there are 32 approved wind farms with 268 turbines and 48 applications for proposed wind farms for a total of 465 turbines. Information on wind farms is available on the Planning website.

8. DEFRA Peat Soils Project

Richard tabled a paper entitled 'Partnership Project on Peat'. This paper was a summary paper outlining the objectives and the progress to date on the DEFRA Peat Soils Project.

Richard agreed to circulate any further information on the project to Dermot and Roy.

Action Point 9: Richard to forward any further information on the DEFRA Peat Soils project to Roy & Dermott.

9. Update on Peat Cutting in NI

Roy gave a presentation on the survey he had carried out on peat cutting in NI. He tabled a paper entitled 'Update of 1990 Survey of Peat Cutting in Northern Ireland'. This work suggested there had been no recent increase in Peat cutting for fuel in NI. Roy agreed to inform the group when the figures have been published.

Action Point 10: Roy to inform the group when the information is published.

10. Red Grouse Workshop

Larry reported on the Red Grouse Workshop held on 18th March 2009. He advised that BASC had taken the lead and that the workshop papers would be published on their website.

Action Point 11: Larry to circulate the website link once the information has been published.

11. AOB

Richard updated the group on the meeting of the joint Irish & British branches of the International Peat Society which was held in Belfast (24th-28th April 2009) <http://www.peatsociety.org/index.php?id=58>

He also informed the group that the Species Biodiversity Delivery Group would be producing a new NI Priority Species list by September.

Claire informed the group of the Environment Liability Directive which is out to consultation at present. She pointed out that it is of value to Peatlands and encouraged everyone to support the inclusion of Annex 1 habitats. She advised that the consultation period would end on 21st May 2009.

12. Date of next Meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 29th October 2009 and will be at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island.

Action Point 1	Laverne to provide new contact details for the NIAF
Action Point 2	Billy to send information on mineral development to the group
Action Point 3	Billy to provide Richard/Martin with wording on ROMPS
Action Point 4	Richard to speak to Godfrey re Agri-environment scheme monitoring programme
Action Point 5	Richard to talk to PEPG and to investigate a 'peat use in government workshop' which would be held in early 2010
Action Point 6	Dermot to resubmit his comments on the work programme
Action Point 7	Richard to add TOR & membership to the agenda for the next meeting
Action Point 8	Richard to review attendance and speak to key people
Action Point 9	Richard to forward any further information on the DEFRA Peat soils project to Roy & Dermott

Action Point 10	Roy to inform the group when the figures from his survey are available
Action Point 11	Larry to circulate the BASC website link once Red Grouse Workshop information has been published