

**Notes of a Meeting of the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic
Partnership Board
30 September 2016**

Present:

Board Members

Councillor Phillip Brooker	Guildford Borough Council
Councillor Graham Cundy	Woking Borough Council
Councillor Martin Tennant	Rushmoor Borough Council
Councillor K Randolph	Elmbridge Borough Council
Councillor David Hilton	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Councillor Mike Goodman	Surrey County Council
Councillor Chris Turrell	Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor James Radley	Hart Borough Council
Councillor Brian Adams	Waverley Borough Council

Advisory Board Members

Heather Lewis	Surrey Wildlife Trust
Matt Jackson	Berkshire, Buckingham and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
Sam Cartwright	Berkshire, Buckingham and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
Heather Richards	RSPB
Simon Thompson	Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Project
Jennifer Wadham	Hampshire County Council (Finance)

Officers/Observers

Ernest Amoako	Woking Borough Council
Julie Gil	Bracknell Forest Council
Paul Druce	Surrey County Council
Jane Ireland	Surrey Heath Borough Council
Louise Piper	Rushmoor Borough Council

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Moira Gibson Surrey Heath Borough Council, Cllr Gail Kingerley Runnymede Borough Council, and Cllr David Parr Runnymede Borough Council.

Cllr Bath Wokingham Borough Council attended the end of the meeting.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes 3.5,4.5 and 4.12 were addressed by updates from Simon Thompson Natural England

Minute 4.8 This needs to be taken forward as an ACTION to invite Crown Estate to a future Board meeting in respect of access to SPA sites on Crown Estate land.

Minute 4.16 this needs to be taken forward as an ACTION and Horshall Common Preservation Society be invited to a future Board meeting

Minute 5.3 Finance Task group has not yet been set up and this needs to be an ACTION for the Chair of the Board.

3 SAMP Update

The Board considered a report setting out an update in respect of the activities and achievements of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMP) Project since May 2016. The report confirmed Natural England's commitment to continue hosting the project for another three years until 2020. The report included updates on project staffing and recruitment, project accommodation, wardening and delivery access to SPA land, communications and promotional work, SPA monitoring and car park counts, a budget update, and SAMP project activity for the next 6 months.

Natural England to continue hosting the SAMP project

The report sought JSPB agreement to the continued hosting of the SAMP project by Natural England until July 2020.

Staffing

In line with the Board's agreement in May the staffing structure will be 6 year round wardens and 6 seasonal wardens. Sarah Bunce has been promoted to Senior Wardens. The full time wardens have all previously worked as seasonal wardens and therefore will not require training.

With regard to the use of volunteers to assist wardens Natural England raised some concern re ensuring a consistent message was given but will continue to look at this proposal for the 2017 bird nesting season. It was reported that between March and August there have been 2,694 wardening hours on the SPA sites and engagement with over 4,000 people using the SPA. In addition to the formal questionnaire to get people's views on SANGS there will also be an informal questionnaire to seek what features of SANGS are liked and what could be improved. This can then be feed back to the Local Planning Authorities and help determine how future monies are used on the sites.

Land Access

Access Licenses had been agreed with a range of landowners and land managers. Work was taking place to finalise access agreements with the Ministry of Defence and wardens were making accompanied visits to MOD land until this was signed off. Sign off should be by the start of the 2017 breeding season

A meeting has been held with local representatives of the Crown Estate and a paper is to be produced to present to their senior management to make the case for allowing SAMP wardens onto Crown Estate Land. The Board in May agreed that representatives of the Crown Estate would be invited to a future Board meeting to discuss their plans for the SPA sites on their land and to try and develop a workable way forward. This remains an ACTION to be taken forward

Promotional Work

The website, which is hosted by Horshall Common Preservation Society, but populated by Natural England and Local Authorities is now fully uploaded and will be tested over the next few weeks.

A report will be presented at a future meeting on car park counts and people counts.

RESOLVED that:

- i. The contents of the report be noted
- ii. That Natural England should host the SAMM project for a further three years until July 2020
- iii. The website should be shared with Local Authority Officers before it goes live to ensure accuracy of data and that an Officer group set up to monitor the website
- iv. Members to access the website before it goes live for Member approval.

4 Eutrophication of Soils - Funding of Trial Project on TBH SPA

Thames Valley Records Centre (TVERC) to the SAMM project for funding to develop and trial a monitoring project to determine the impact of soil eutrophication as a result of dog fouling. TVERC would initially focus on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA to test the method

Following discussion Members considered that this trial was outside of scope of the SANG and SAMM projects.

RESOLVED that;

- i. The report be noted
- ii. The SAMM project would not fund the eutrophication of soils project

5 Financial Report

The Board considered a report setting out the financial position of the Thames Basin Heaths Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) project as at 30 September 2016.

As at 31 March 2016, the balance in the Endowment Fund was £2.693m, and a further £525,205 was held in the Maintenance Fund, to pay for project expenditure. It is projected that a further £1.053m will be added to Endowment Account in the 2016/17 financial year, giving an anticipated total of £3.747m available to be invested.

Based on current projections of income and expenditure, the balance on the Endowment Fund would increase to £6.450m by 31 March 2019, whilst the balance on the Maintenance Fund is expected to increase to £719,354 in the same period.

Under the terms of the SAMM agreement, the Board held responsibility for regularly reviewing the value and performance of the Endowment Fund and for procuring the service of an Independent Financial Advisor to help maximise the returns achieved within the Boards' investment guidelines.

The Board noted the report and that the Financial Task group still needed to meet.

6 Any other business

A question in respect of Brexit was raised. It was noted that there would still be a need to protect Annex1 birds and that the current legislation was enshrined in UK law

A question was raised in respect of seeking LEP funding for SANGs. It was noted that some Hart and Surrey Heath have been successful in getting LEP funding for SANGs.

A question was raised regarding change of air routes from Farnborough. It was noted that there would be no change in aircraft movements. It was noted that future monitoring may consider if there is any impact on air quality.

7 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that dates of future meeting dates would be circulated by email.