

# Minutes of meeting of the Environment Thematic Group of West Lancashire LSP

## Natural Environment Sub Group

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010

Present: Richard Small (Chair) – Liverpool John Moores University  
Tina Iball – WLBC, Environment  
Dominic Rigby – LCC, Countryside  
Lindsay Beaton – Wildlife Trust  
Joanne Hudson – LCC, Environment  
Steve Kent – WLBC, Countryside and Leisure

		Action
1.	<p><b><u>Introductions and apologies</u></b></p> <p>RS welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Joanne Hudson was introduced to the group. Joanne will attend the ETG meetings in future, replacing Fiona Cruchley who is now covering Lancashire North area.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from:</p> <p>Dave Dunlop – Wildlife Trust Tim Graham – Wildlife Trust Gillian Whitfield - WLBC, Planning Policy Peter Jepson – LCC, Ecology</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Minutes of the last meeting</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true record.</p> <p>Action plans from subsequent years have been checked and not found to include an action on archaeological works in the borough. It was agreed this should be investigated and built into the action plan when it is revised in March 2011, if appropriate.</p> <p>DR corrected an update in the progress report, with regards to Martin Mere. The public right of way access is still pending and hasn't gone through yet.</p>	TI
3.	<p><b><u>ETG Action Plan Progress Updates</u></b></p>	

Please see Progress Report June to November 2010 for details of progress made over this quarter.

Other issues discussed which require actions include:

Recent changes to the Higher Level Stewardship scheme but no details were known by members of the group.

*Follow up – Details of spending have been confirmed until 2014. So farmers who have applied and waiting to learn if they have been successful, should soon receive start dates. Further details, including the grant spends available can be found here:*

<http://ww2.defra.gov.uk/news/2010/11/16/hls-scheme/>

**Action 2.h. – Purple Ramp Fumitory**

Progress has dwindled over recent years, group members unsure if any work is being undertaken. RS to make enquires with a colleague at Martin Mere.

RS

**Action 2.i. – Great Crested Newts.**

Following recent visits to Pond Close, Tarleton, it was queried if there is any comeback on developers who are bound by conditions on a planning application to mitigate against impacts a development may have on wildlife, which are later found to have not worked?

TI

**Action 5.d – Rufford Old Hall**

A new site manager has been appointed. DR to enquire if any progress has been made with regards to grassland restoration.

DR

**Action 6.c – New and Built Structures**

WLBC have recently taken over a site in Scarisbrick which contains an underground bat roost, however we are currently unsure if bats still occupy the site. There is currently no means of monitoring or managing the site.

SK

Are Planners provided with enough information to ensure developers design buildings to help protect biodiversity? This needs to be incorporated in the core strategy or accompanying SPG and enforced at Planning Committees. Is there a best practice guide available? TI to investigate further.

TI

The group also discussed aspirational actions which could be progressed by the group to encourage community involvement:

**Improved access to sites of interest**

Designate and improve public rights of way and access routes between Martin Mere, Mere Sands Wood and the Coastal region.

**Community Allotments in Hesketh Bank**

Currently looking for funding to help deliver 40 – 50 new communal allotments and a permaculture site on land owned by the Parish Council, for community benefit.

4.	<p><b><u>Lower Alt with Crossens Flood Risk Management Plan</u></b></p> <p>TI informed the group of an Environment Agency Strategic Environment assessment currently out for consultation, looking at future flood risk management within the Lower Alt with Crossens pumped drainage catchment. Any comments would be gratefully received and fed back to the EA.</p> <p>This can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/124390.aspx">http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/124390.aspx</a></p>	TI
5.	<p><b><u>LAA and National Indicators Update</u></b></p> <p>TI informed the group that Central Government have made quite a few changes to Local Authority Performance arrangements over recent months. Back in June they scrapped the Comprehensive Area Assessment to relieve Councils of reporting which diverts money away from the front line. In October they took further action in revoking all designations linked to Local Area Agreements and the National Indicator Set.</p> <p>They have also announced that the National Indicator Set will be replaced with a single comprehensive list of all data central government require. Further information on this is expected over the coming months and will be reported in due course.</p>	
6	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p>No items were raised.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>TI to arrange electronically for mid February.</p>	TI

# **Environment Thematic Group of West Lancashire LSP**

## **Progress Report June to November 2010**

### **Natural Environment Sub Group**

#### **Action 1.b – Lancashire Natural Environment Service**

Since January 2010 the NI 197 team has surveyed and assessed the management of 94 Biological Heritage Sites across Lancashire, 8 of which are located in West Lancashire:

- Ferny Knoll Bog
- Holland Moss
- Nuck's Wood
- Crossens pumping station
- Sollom Erratics
- Scarisbrick Hall Woods and Dam Woods
- Hesketh Bank Brickworks (Alty's)
- Tawd Valley Woods
- Dickets Brook Woods

Writing up surveys and providing management advice to landowners/managers is ongoing and will be completed over the winter months before the next survey season starts.

#### **Action 2.j. – Increase/ enhance access to Hunters Hill**

A Phase 1 survey and NVC report has been undertaken and the Countryside Rangers are working on a management plan for the site. The lower area of the site is up for sale which if sold could cause difficulties with access. This will be monitored over coming months.

#### **Action 2.k. – Increase/ enhance access – Ribble Coast and Wetland Regional Park**

Booklet promoting cycling was published the last week in October. Development of an access strategy is underway but it's doubtful it will be completed by March 2011.

#### **Action 2.l. – Increase/ enhance access – Martin Mere**

Web cameras are now operational and available to view on line.

#### **Action 2.m. - Increased provisions for visitors at Mere Sands Wood**

Edge Hill has made a geomorphological tube for educational purposes. Camera links have been installed in the visitor centre and detailed interpretation of what can be seen is provided in the hides.

#### **Action 4.a - Salt Marsh**

Works have been completed but it will take many years for the salt marsh vegetation to establish.

#### **Action 5.c – Gorse Hill Nature Reserve**

Area of bracken has been cleared and heather planted.

**Action 7.d – Community Woodland and Orchards**

A site in Burscough has been selected by the Woodlands from Waste project, to establish native woodland over a 25 year period. Tree planting will be carried out by Global Renewables. Currently awaiting borehole survey results, expected in Feb/March 2011.