



**UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man
Stakeholder Partnership Group meeting
31st January 2024, 2pm – 4pm**

**Minutes of a meeting of the UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder
Partnership Group (UBIOM SPG) held on in the King Orry Room, Government Offices,
Douglas**

Present:

Hon Alfred Cannan MHK	Chief Minister, Chair	AC
Hon Clare Barber MHK	Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture	CB
Mr Scott Gallacher	CEO, DEFA	SG
Dr Ken Milne	Director of Environment, DEFA	KM
Dr Richard Selman	Head of Ecosystem Policy, DEFA	RGS
Miss Jo Overty	Biosphere Project Officer, DEFA	JO
Miss Breeshey Kermode	Biosphere Project Assistant, DEFA (minutes)	BK
Mr Chris Kneale	Director of Agriculture, DEFA	CK
Miss Jade Foster	Engagement Manager, Climate Change Transformation Team	JF
Ms Ruth Keggin-Gell	Yn Greinneyder, Culture Vannin	RKG
Mr Paul Fletcher	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	PF
Mr Peter Reid	Institute of Directors Isle of Man	PR
Mark Waterhouse	Institute of Directors Isle of Man	MW
Ms Ali De Backer	Arts Engagement Officer, Isle of Man Arts Council	ADB
Mrs Alison Teare	Head, Locate Isle of Man	AT
Dr David Beard	Manx Fish Producers Organisation	DB
Ms Sarah Comish	Manx National Farmers' Union	SC
Mr Leigh Morris	CEO, Manx Wildlife Trust	LM
Mrs Muriel Garland	The Green Centre	MG
Ms Gail Corrin	Higher Education Manager, University College Isle of Man	GC
Ms Deborah Heather	CEO, Visit Isle of Man	DH
Ms Ciara Sowerby	Youth Representative	CS
Miss Rachel Smith	Youth Representative	RS

Apologies:

Beach Buddies
Manx National Heritage

Item		Action
1/24/1	<p>Chief Minister’s welcome and opening remarks CM read his opening remarks, thanking the room for their attendance and welcoming new faces including new Biosphere Youth Rep, Rachel Smith.</p>	
1/24/2	<p>Apologies Recorded above.</p>	
1/24/3	<p>Conflicts of interest with items on the agenda None recorded.</p>	
1/24/4	<p>Minutes of meeting for approval Minutes of July meeting approved and signed off.</p>	
1/24/5	<p>Rolling action point list Creation of Manx map - Liam Smyth, UNESCO Local to Global Project Lead, has left his position and has been succeeded by John Carmichael. There has been a lack of funds on both sides in regard to the Manx Gaelic-translation, so it was decided to put the translation on hold and commission an illustrated local map in English. It was noted that Visit Britain do not recognise Manx as a priority language but this may change if a map is published. There was mention of the Biosphere Artist in Residence being a potential candidate for the design aspect.</p> <p>Technical Subgroup – GC recapped the group’s work to date and explained that the work is on pause until there is an update available regarding the new Biosphere board that has been proposed.</p> <p>Volunteer subgroup – this is an ongoing piece of work and there may be an update at the next meeting.</p> <p>Exhibition subgroup – the group have a template for more detailed costings in regard to holding an exhibition within Manx National Heritage (MNH) exhibition spaces. Meetings with the DEFA Minister and Deputy CEO happened in Autumn and it was noted that timing is key as UBIOM’s 10 year anniversary falls in 2026, in alignment with the Periodic Review. It was noted that MNH have a long lead in time of 12 months for an exhibition. There was discussion around if it should happen the same year or ‘within the ten years’, and whether it should be planned for residents or visitors. Duration was also discussed. There would be volunteers required for set up, maintenance etc. Funding was brought up as cost comes in to play for set up and space. JO added that the Periodic Review is due for submission in September 2026, not before, and care must be taken around timings for official events. It was suggested that PR is worked up around</p>	

	<p>'10 years as a Biosphere' throughout summer 2026 – a celebration of events that already happen through the year.</p> <p>Embedding Biosphere across Government policy – the launch of the Climate Impact Assessment Tool relates to this as it aligns with Biosphere and sustainability goals. There is still further work to be done in this area and any further updates will be reported at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>1/24/6</p>	<p>Progress report – paper and verbal update by Jo Overty, UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Project Officer, and Breeshey Kermode, UBIOM Project Assistant</p> <p>Paper taken as read. The group was informed that tickets will go on sale for the third Biosphere lecture next week. It is being delivered by Dr Victoria Hurth, and SPG members will be offered priority booking.</p>	
<p>1/24/7</p>	<p>New Governance Update – Scott Gallacher</p> <p>SG wishes to strengthen the governance of and ability to deliver more for Biosphere, including providing more resource and potential staffing, to reflect upon job descriptions and to ensure there are no gaps through the transition period. It has been noted that Biosphere is much more than just DEFA and the wider Government. A board focussed on delivery and progress will be set up with an independent chair representing cross-community sectors and regularly feeding in to SPG meetings. The first 6-12 months will see monthly meets, and it was suggested that over the next 4-6 weeks, work will happen across the SPG that includes writing TORs for the board, a job description for the independent chair, and recruitment of board members through an expressions of interest process. If TORs can be agreed and shared electronically the new board will be in place before the July SPG. CM asked how SG sees the board interacting with the wider SPG collective. SG explained this would happen through regular reporting and ensuring good communication. This next step will recognise that Biosphere is for the whole Island and its collective efforts across the community. It was suggested that each member of the SPG send 10 bullets about what Biosphere means to them/their organisation to gather these thoughts and feelings. The recent partner survey conducted by the Technical Sub Group (TSG) was brought up in relation to this and CB suggested that the TSG are heavily involved in setting up the TORS for the new sub-board.</p> <p>ACTION: start plans to set up a new Biosphere Board</p>	<p>SG</p>
	<p>1/24/8</p> <p>Technical Sub Group – discussion led by Gail Corrin, Higher Education Manager, UCM, and Leigh Morris, Chief Executive, Manx Wildlife Trust</p> <p>GC provided an update on this during item 5, so the chair moved on to the next item.</p>	
	<p>1/24/9</p> <p>UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Youth Representatives – updates from Georgia Untisz and Rachel Smith</p> <p>RS introduced herself and told the group she was keen to start work in her role. Both representatives have met and discussed ideas for better</p>	

engagement with youth concerning Biosphere initiatives as they noted a lack of engagement from young people initially. They are currently working on building a network drawn primarily from their own circles, consisting of representatives who are passionate around this topic with the hope of creating a snowball effect. UNESCO class youth as those aged 18 – 35. The youth representatives' next action is to organise a youth event, centred on what Biosphere means to them, including a presentation detailing connections and community etc. and ways to be involved. RS attended the Global Youth Biodiversity Network's 'how can youth involvement be measured and what are the indicators?' They wish to create a baseline for engagement and see if this increases, through dialogue between the youth population and empowerment. There was a discussion in the group around possibilities of further funding for initiatives concerning the youth work streams and it was noted that there is a graduates and young professional's officer in the Locate Department who may be a good contact in this respect.

1/24/10

Standing item: Research – verbal updates

Mark Metzger, chair of the UK National Committee for UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, was impressed with the breadth of research happening in the Island. The Island is hosting the UNESCO MAB Committee spring meeting in March and the new strategy for research in Biospheres will be released.

LM – Manx State of Nature is being published this year: MWT have collated the best biological data from all the environmental organizations in the Island. This publication will be fact based, without opinion. It will be a baseline of what we know (and don't know) about our biodiversity.

Manx Biodiversity Recording Partnership: MWT were awarded a DEFA contract in 2023, the new biological recorder is catching up and has uploaded thousands of new records to the database Recorder 6, and to the NBN Atlas. Last week 143,429 records were sent to the NBN Atlas, comprising records loaded into Recorder 6 since September 2019. The aim now is to drive the pipeline of biological data across the Isle of Man.

DESC/DEFA Education Contract: MWT are now developing an entitlement for every child in the Island of a certain age. This is being delivered through the development of teaching resources, training for teachers, sessions in schools, sessions in nature, and sessions at Ardwhallan. MWT are also setting up a school twinning with a secondary school in Montserrat.

Wallaby Survey: the first Wallaby count was carried out this time last year by drone survey and discussions are currently taking place, to bring the surveyor back to carry out further work, with an aim to obtain a whole-island figure of the Wallaby population.

Agri-environment Scheme: there is the desire and opportunity to collect biological data on Manx farms to aid MWT's long term assessment of the impact of the AES in the Island's participating farms.

GC – UCM's 5th research festival took place in October and the opening speaker's talk was centred on climate change. This year's festival date is

18th October and proves to be an excellent hub for research. A Masters student is doing research into the economic and social value of the Biosphere to the Island. There is a potential that the Island could see PhD students based here.

Chester University have established a research and knowledge exchange scheme and UCM are finalising the continuation of their Chester University partnership.

UCM have committed to a global initiative in March in relation to SDG teaching.

Other updates – round the table

JC – The UNESCO Biosphere Schools week is happening for the third year, from Monday 24th June to Friday 28th June. The week is in the lead up to and complements national week. Schools have the option to engage in an activity or multiple activities of their choice relating to the Biosphere ethos. They are supplied with ideas and resources and are encouraged to share what they get up to.

RKG – There is new folklore book out called A Guide to the Folklore Sites of the Isle of Man, by James Franklin, Sam Hudson and Katie Newton. Copies of the book will be given to the British Guild of Travel Writers who are visiting the Island.

There will be a Manx summer school in July for adults, scheduled to begin at the same time as yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering.

60 minutes did a feature on the Isle of Man TT which included a 5 minute segment about the Manx language. The Cooish Manx Language Festival took place in November with over 20 events happening across the festival. The Council of Europe Committee of North American Manx Association is visiting the Island this year. Manxmusic.com is going to be relaunched, The Manx Folk Awards are happening again at Easter and the theme is the sea, tying in to the RNLI's 200th anniversary.

A Year of the Manx Language is happening in 2026 which could potentially tie in to the '10 years as a Biosphere exhibition'. There is also potentially a bigger project concerning Manx place names brewing for 2026.

PF – FWAG recently hosted Ewan Davies, the current holder of the Silver Lapwing Award for the whole of the UK. They were here to meet the Cooil brothers who are local Bronze Chough Award Winners. FWAG are hoping to engage with Stuart Johnson to focus on regenerative farming and soil health and there will be upcoming opportunities advertised in terms of events.

DB – MCS, who produce the good food guide, have rated the Manx king scallop fishery as the highest quality in the UK. DB praised the work of the Isle of Man Fisheries and said the Biosphere message adds positive value. The Blue Marine Foundation have commented positively on the new memorandum of understanding between the Isle of Man and UK and have offered assistance and advice if required.

All scallop shells have now stopped being tipped over Peel Hill and are put through crushers which powders them, becoming limestone fertiliser that can be used in farming.

<p>1/24/11</p> <p>1/24/12</p>	<p>DH – The Guild of British Travel Writers are visiting the Island next week and there will be a focus on sustainability throughout the trip and there will be a celebration of Manx food on Monday night. The UK is still the biggest market for tourism to the Island.</p> <p>JF – There is a climate risks and opportunities project assessment happening. New habitat surveys will be conducted, identifying the most productive soils and developing a tool to assist with creating more considered land management decisions. This will be a two year project. There has been good momentum and feedback for the carbon literacy training recently rolled out in the public service, delivered by Earth Scope. There are plans to execute a public project for earth day this year in collaboration with the Isle of Man Arts Council, with more information being made available in a few weeks.</p> <p>Any other business</p> <p>LM – noted that the land management tender is seen as hugely important by MWT.</p> <p>MG – raised personal worries about the social and human aspects of the Biosphere if people are thinking and worrying too much about biodiversity. Sense of place is important and there could be more of a ‘people’ aspect. There was a general discussion in response to this around Biosphere initiatives in the community, business, economy and the challenging work of ‘building up’ of the project across all areas.</p> <p>Date of next meeting The date of the next UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man Stakeholder Partnership Group Meeting will be July 2024, 2pm to 4pm, in the King Orry Room, Government Offices, Bucks Road, Douglas.</p> <p>Note: minutes will appear on www.biosphere.im once agreed.</p> <p>Approval: Hon Alfred Cannan MHK, Chief Minister and Chair of UNESCO Biosphere Isle of Man.</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>Date: Tuesday 9 July 2024</p>	
--	---	--