

# SBIS board meeting

19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – Microsoft Teams online meeting hosted by SBIS

## MINUTES

### Present:

James Meyer, East Suffolk Council, Chair  
Emma Aldous, SBIS  
Hannah Alred, SBIS  
Sarah Barker, Ipswich Borough Council  
Tim De-Keyzer, Suffolk County Council  
Helen Jacobs, Essex & Suffolk Water

Rupert Masefield, Suffolk Wildlife Trust  
Jacqui Miller, RSPB  
Gary Quilter, West Suffolk Council  
Martin Sanford, SBIS  
Chris Strachan, Environment Agency

### Apologies:

Damien Parker, Andrew Murray-Wood, Richard Parmee

The meeting commenced at 2pm

### Related documents:

- A SBIS Board minutes 14 July 2023
- B SBIS Budget 2023\_24 Draft
- C SBIS Budget 2024\_25 Draft
- D AWI update
- E LERC fee comparison

SBIS board meeting	
ITEM	ACTION
<p><b>1. Apologies and Introductions</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Damien Parker, Andrew Murray-Wood and Richard Parmee. Tim De Keyzer sent apologies that he would be late joining the meeting.</p> <p>John Jackson has now left Natural England, James Meyer offered to contact NE to see if they had someone who could attend meetings.</p>	JM
<p><b>2. Minutes of the last meeting (attachment A SBIS Board minutes 14 July 2023)</b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters arising: Raising SBIS prices</p>	
<p><b>3. SBIS update</b></p> <p>Martin provided an update on SBIS activities.</p> <p>After Jane Mason's retirement Hannah Alred is the new GIS officer. There is an overlap in Hannah's roles as she is still finishing work on the AWI.</p> <p>Support from Andy Mercer (employed part-time via OPUS) has been essential in managing an increasing workload from consultancy enquiries.</p> <p>New updates are now available to download from the SBIS website and invoices for Local Authorities will go out in January.</p> <p>In 2024 there will be a lot of extra work for SBIS as part of the LNRS.</p>	
<p><b>4. Budget (attachments B SBIS Budget 2023_24 Draft and C SBIS Budget 2024_25 Draft)</b></p> <p>The mid-year budgets include the 2023 pay award and show a provisional price increase of 20% for consultants, which still leaves SBIS using its reserve.</p> <p>[Note: the attached budget has been revised to show the pricing agreed by SBIS]</p> <p>The possibility of increasing SLA contributions was raised.</p> <p>There was discussion about applying for grant funding.</p> <p>Martin stated that SBIS did not have the staff resources to write bids for grant funding. Rupert Masefield suggested creating a bank of funding bids for future use.</p>	RM

<p><b>5. Ancient Woodland Inventory update (attachment D AWI update)</b></p> <p>Hannah gave a presentation on her work on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, which is in its final phase.</p> <p>Previously all Ancient Woodland was automatically designated as County Wildlife Sites (CWS), however, with the updated inventory containing many smaller sites (under 2ha) it may not be appropriate for these to be designated as CWS, this remains to be discussed. New AWI sites will be an important element in LNRS work</p> <p>Hannah Alred and Rupert Masefield discussed pooling volunteer resource to support SWT work with Dormouse surveying and AWI surveying where there is an overlap.</p> <p>Hannah shared the details of promotional materials created for the Suffolk Tree Warden Network highlighting the hedgerow maps. It was decided that the maps are a valuable resource that need to be further publicised. Hannah and Emma will create publicity material for general use and share with the board.</p>	<p>HA, RM</p> <p>HA, EA</p>
<p><b>6. Charging (attachment E LERC fee comparison)</b></p> <p>Emma shared a document comparing SBIS pricing to other LERCs, which clearly showed the need for a price rise. SBIS charges had been fixed at £100+VAT since 2006. It was pointed out that whilst there are several LERCs who deal with enquiries via an online automated system, SBIS has a fast response time and their data is checked and improved by humans, which was felt to provide a better quality of data and service.</p> <p>It was agreed that there should be a price increase for consultants effective from 1st January 2024. SBIS staff would decide the amount and report back to the board next day.</p> <p>[An increase of 40% for a standard search and a reduction in the discount for batch searches to 15% was agreed and sent to the board on 20 December 2023.]</p> <p>Increasing SLA contributions was discussed. It was noted that timing is an issue as most have already set their budgets, and those budgets are being squeezed.</p> <p>The idea of seeking legacies was discussed, but no decision was made.</p>	<p>MS, EA, HA</p>
<p><b>7. CWS re-survey and rewrites</b></p> <p>County Wildlife Sites Just over 100 citations have been updated in 2023, SBIS has funded SWT £7500 for this work - Re-writing citations will be ongoing cycle of work.</p> <p>The Wildlife Trusts have a national project that will collate local wildlife sites data to identify the role of LWS in achieving 30 by 30 and nature recovery. To some extent, this picks up from DEFRA collation of data on sites 'in positive conservation management'. See <a href="https://yorkshiredatacentre-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/national_coordinator_alerc_org_uk/EYBFZohHzzjDmAEB33S3WYQBsfm_eH8OiZcEHRGrEWqpQw?e=JoqXcS">https://yorkshiredatacentre-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/national_coordinator_alerc_org_uk/EYBFZohHzzjDmAEB33S3WYQBsfm_eH8OiZcEHRGrEWqpQw?e=JoqXcS</a></p> <p>SBIS raised concerns that there no new Roadside Nature Reserves have been designated in the last two years. Tim De Keyzer responded that it is a Suffolk County Council commitment, but the person looking after the RNR project has left and has not yet been replaced.</p>	
<p><b>8. AOB</b></p> <p>There was some discussion on requirements for LNRS and impact on SBIS workload. Tim De Keyzer mentioned that Responsible Authorities have been allocated budget for this.</p> <p>At a recent ALERC meeting concerns were raised about making CWS boundaries available online. There are ongoing discussions at a national level which need to address potential loss of income for some LERCs and the impact of releasing sensitive information (this also applies to species data used for LNRS). ALERC have shared a useful folder with notes on some of these topics.</p> <p>Martin shared the details of the Local Biodiversity Data Symposium in January that could be of interest to those at the meeting <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/local-biodiversity-data-virtual-symposium-tickets-712837876277?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/local-biodiversity-data-virtual-symposium-tickets-712837876277?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete</a></p>	
<p><b>11. Next meeting</b></p> <p>June 2024, to be arranged via Doodle Poll</p>	
<p>With no further business the meeting was closed at 4:00pm</p>	