



SBIS BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Meeting held at East Suffolk Council, Station Road, Melton
IP12 1RT

28 June 2017

Present

Sarah Barker (SB)	IBC	Helen Jacobs (HJ)	Essex & Suffolk Water
Gen Broad (GB)	SBIS	Jacqui Miller (JM)	RSPB
Dorothy Casey (DC)	Suffolk Wildlife Trust	Desi Reed (DR)	East Suffolk Council
Adrian Chalkley (AC)	Suffolk Naturalists' Society	Kate Riddington (KR)	Ipswich Museum
Nick Collinson (NC)	Suffolk County Council	Gary Quilter (GQ)	St Edmundsbury BC
Peter Garrett (PG)	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils	Martin Sanford (MS)	SBIS
Ben Heather (BH)	SBIS	Chris Strachan (CS)	Environment Agency

Apologies: Alison Collins (Natural England), Andrew Murray-Wood (SCC), Damien Parker (St Edmundsbury BC)

1. Introductions

2. Minutes of the last meeting (2 November 2016), Attachment A

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising

- **Item 3. Damien Parker Action:** To ask District Councils for approval.
- **Item 8. Recording Bursaries: MS and BH Action** – provide paragraph that can be put into internal communications.
- **ALL other actions complete**

3. Memorandum of Agreement (Attachment B)

MS has received no comments.

SB is awaiting legal team feedback.

DR: the MoA is not contentious and can be signed.

HJ has consulted the Essex & Suffolk Water legal team. There is confusion on the definitions of 'key' and 'funding' partners – E&S W are not sure which category of partner they are. It was agreed the wording should be changed to 'core' funders who contribute £7 k +. HJ will sign once the dates have been inserted and abbreviations clarified.

NC: the MoA is not a legally binding document and gives clarity only.

Action MS: to provide a final version of the MoA.

Action: GQ pass the MoA to Damien Parker to get legal advice.

Action ALL: send any comments to MS by 31st July.

Action ALL: aim to have all the MoAs signed by the next Board meeting.

4. Proposed move to 'The Hold' 2019 (Attachments C1, C2, C3)

https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/the_hold/

(Illustrations on pp. 6 and 7)

A proposal to move the Records Office into a new building near the University of Suffolk is at the 2nd stage of an HLF bid. Advantages include:

- enhanced IT facilities
- better working environment
- new technologies – opportunities
- closer ties with university
- community outreach ('What's in my environment') / bringing records to life / encouraging younger people.

GeoSuffolk and Suffolk Naturalists' Society (SNS) could move to The Hold as well.

NC: including SBIS, GeoSuffolk and SNS in The Hold would strengthen the HLF bid.

AC: SBIS currently helps to maintain the collections in the Museum; some County Recorders need to know that the collections are secure.

MS: the link with the collections has dropped away. IBC has an on-going HLF bid which will be submitted in 2018.

Action SB: follow up with IBC on the business case for a cash contribution to SBIS if they are no longer hosting. The outcome will be confirmed by February.

Action MS: find out what the costs are for and how much they would be (£10 k rental has been suggested).

Action MS: provide an update at the next Board meeting.

The Board agreed that the move is a good idea.

5. Budget (Attachments D1 & D2)

2016/17 - the actual income from consultancy totals just over £34 k vs the predicted income of £23 k. This is thanks to BH's hard work on consultancy data requests.

2017/18 – the first three months of the year fit with the predicted income of £30 k.

Many Natural England projects need data and they are still pushing for Open Data, but record centres have declined.

The £5 k for the Recording Bursaries was a one-off for 2016 only.

Budget reserves remain unchanged.

County Wildlife Sites (CWSs)

NC has provided £5 k funding for ecologist Andrina Walmsley to resurvey the Roadside Nature Reserve CWSs. These are highly vulnerable grassland sites, last surveyed in 2003, some of which have seriously declined in quality.

MS plans to organise a national conference in 2019, collaborating with Plantlife and other national organisations.

PG: many communities contact him to ask that grass is cut short, education is needed.

MS: IBC's Landseer Park is a good example of successful wild flower planting and reduced mowing.

There is £10 k in the budget for the CWS survey volunteer expenses.

6. Biodiversity Checking Service (update) <http://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/bcs>

GB gave a presentation on the background to the Biodiversity Checking Service (BCS) and the current situation.

DR: East Suffolk Council team leader planners would be interested to know more about the BCS. She will provide GB with contacts.

Action GB and SB: include BCS information in the planning training sessions to be organised by SWT and the Suffolk Planning and Biodiversity Group.

7. [County Wildlife Sites](#) re-survey (update)

MS: there are 936 County Wildlife Sites (CWSs) in Suffolk. SWT and SBIS are collaborating on monitoring site condition and surveying for species records. GB is making good progress with identifying owners with the input of SWT.

The Smartsheet is working well. This enables people across different organisations to input data in defined categories so the info can be shared. Lists of the previous species records for each site have been attached to each CWS. There is no personal data and the Smartsheet is only shared with invited individuals.

It's hoped that BH may be able to set up a process to produce site specific maps automatically.

DC: SWT has a target of 100 CWSs surveyed for condition each year, but this will probably be more like 150-200 sites. Susan Stone and Leonie Washington are the SWT surveyors.

GB confirmed that SBIS volunteers will not give management advice to landowners. She specifically tells them not to give advice and when confirming the visit to the landowner, she asks that they contact Susan or Leonie if they require management advice.

Action BH: add another column to the Smartsheet for Positive Conservation Management.

NC: In the past, Defra required LAs to collect data on CWS quality as a performance indicator. SCC has continued to collect this data.

Action GB: add review of why we are collecting CWS data and what we are doing with it to the agenda for the CWS Panel meeting in October.

MS confirmed that SBIS has version control of the citations. SWT will be re-writing the CWS citations.

MS: the strength of the CWS system is that it is dynamic and can change with a change in site quality or when new sites are identified.

8. Tranquillity mapping (briefing)

BH gave a briefing on his work with the AONBs and Deben Estuary Partnership to map 'tranquil' sites in Suffolk. Defining 'tranquillity' is difficult as it means different things to different people.

BH has used a grid based approach together with a ranking system. A baseline needs to be established looking at land cover, including protected sites, building types (e.g. pubs, caravan parks), footpaths, car parks and river usage.

BH showed the resulting 'heat' map with the edges smoothed.

BH worked with the Estuaries Officer to test the result on the ground by asking volunteers to approach visitors with a questionnaire. There are two types of assessment 1) audio and 2) visual. Four surveys will be undertaken, 4 times, by 4 different people in order to obtain an average.

The results will be available by the end of the summer. This is a pilot study to test if the mapping can be used as a tool for management.

DR: East Suffolk Council uses 'Dark Sky' and 'Tranquillity' in policies. Perhaps this should be considered in planning applications?

The map will help with a) planning and b) access/tourism. The more tranquil areas won't have the infrastructure to deal with increased visitors.

Tranquillity is subjective and so the ground truthing results will be valuable and revealing.

(JM left at 4.00 pm)

9. Proposed National Website for consultancies (Attachments E1, E2, E3, E4, E5)

MS: the Lincolnshire Nature Partnership has been working on the feasibility of launching a national website for delivering data search reports for consultants. The local feedback is that this could work, the national feedback is that predictability is essential.

SBIS would lose income, but MS has said Suffolk is provisionally interested. It would mean operating two data sets nationally which cause problems.

NBN promotes Open Access data. AC: it takes a long time for the NBN to show uploaded data. This new system would slow it up even more.

MS: if the Association of Local Environmental Record Centres (ALERC) doesn't back the system, it won't happen. The best outcome would be if NBN re-introduced their previous model. The new model could compromise the relationship between amateur recorders and the record centres. Lincolnshire Nature Partnership has been assessing commercial views only.

The Board agreed that MS should continue to be involved in the discussions.

10. NBN Atlas progress <https://nbnatlas.org/>

The NBN Atlas has been launched and now includes 215 million records. However, some records have gone as people have withdrawn data. Mapping can analyse 'what data is there in my area'.

SBIS will continue to contribute to the Atlas and update the records every 6 months.

There are some clever tools on the site, but the site itself admits there are some problems. It is more interactive than the NBN Gateway and it is an exciting project, although it needs some more refinements.

11. AOB

BH: Brandon County Park Bioblitz is on Tuesday 8th August.

12. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.

THE HOLD: SUFFOLK HERITAGE CENTRE
 4 SCHEME DESCRIPTION 3D VIEWS OPTION 02

View A - From Fore Street



View B - From Car Park



View C - Through to Waterfront



Key Plan



PRINCIPLE RICHARDS SHARRATT ARCHITECTS | SVM | ATOM CONSULTANTS | PUNCKE | EIGHT ASSOCIATES | CLARKE SAUNDERS | BUREAU VERITAS |