

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Invasive Non Native Species Group

Elan Valley Dwr Cymru Centre

6th July 2016

Minutes

Attendees

Dave Thomas (Chair)	DT	Welsh Government - LNF
Richard Poole	RP	Dwr Cymru
Jo Cable	JC	Cardiff University
Holly York	HY	Wales Biodiversity Partnership
Nigel Ajax-Lewis	NA-L	Wildlife Trusts (and on behalf of WEL)
Kathleen Carroll	KC	WG – LNF
Anthony Hicks	AH	WG – LNF
Alison Smith	AS	WG - Property
Lucy Cornwell	LC	GB non-native species secretariat (GB NNSS) (Dial-in)
Dan Forman	DF	Swansea University (Dial-in)
Nick Bialynicki-Birula	NB-B	NRW (Dial-In)
Dave Thorpe	DTh	NRW (Dial-in)
Gabe Wyn	GW	Natural Resources Wales (NRW) (Dial-in - part)
Chris Tucker	CT	NRW (Dial-in- part)

Apologies

Sean Hathaway	SH	City and County of Swansea
Judith Oakley	JO	CCS, University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Colin Cheesman	CC	Plantlife
Dan Jones	DJ	Swansea University
Niall Moore	NM	GB NNSS
Jo Mullett	JM	Knotweed Control
Emma Barton	EB	RYA
Sharon Davies	SD	WG – Marine
Keith Davenport	KD	Ornamental Fish

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and AOB items

DT extended a warm welcome to all attendees.

AOB items

- Phytoremediation trial using Water hyacinth proposal
- LC reminded members that the Non-Native Species Stakeholder Forum is being held this Friday (8th July) in York. WG are unable to attend but NRW (DTh) is hoping to attend.

2. Actions from previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and will be published on the WBP website. Chair thanked HY for minute taking.

ACTION 1: HY to upload the minutes from the previous meeting onto the WBP website

The majority of the actions from the previous meeting are agenda items or listed below with an update.

March Action 2: Investigate development of INNS data and biosecurity policies for CIEEM best practice – *DTh following up with Mike Willis. Carry forward action.*

ACTION 2: DTh to continue to investigate INNS data and biosecurity policies for CIEEM best practice.

March Action 3: DT to contact Dai Harris regarding potential INNS species listing on the new **Section 7** list of the Environment Act. HY to arrange specific meeting to discuss if required.

Update provided by DT. Initially development of the new S7 lists criteria will be for INNS not to be listed as such, but referenced under a matrix e.g. the relationship of grey squirrel with red squirrel. INNS will be discussed further as the S7 criteria are developed, particularly as initial discussions took place before BREXIT. The S7 Criteria will be out for consultation later this year. DF expressed concern over poor practice seen in INNS control/management in areas of Water Voles – important to identify S7 listed species and work as appropriate.

ACTION 3: DT/NB-B to update the group on the development of Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act at the next meeting

March Action 7: NM/DT to check with Defra if England contingency plans drafts can be circulated to members at this stage. *Unfortunately the draft plans cannot be circulated at present, although both NRW and WG are able to view them as members of the Rapid Response Group. DT noted it would be useful to share the papers to gather members' thoughts on the proposed plans.*

March Action 12: Potential effects on Japanese Knotweed spread or potential for eradication during rail electrification work in South Wales. NA-L to investigate

INNS including Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam present on railways leading to potential for dispersal/spread, and also the potential for eradication work therefore useful for group/group members to engage with Network Rail.

ACTION 4: Potential effects on/for INNS during the proposed Rail electrification work in South Wales - **NA-L** to continue to watch proposals and **AS** will make enquiries with transport colleagues.

Discussion points on items from previous meeting

- Local Biodiversity Action Plans – several LBAP partnerships are updating Action Plans, including inclusion of INNS Actions. HY will circulate to partners when available.

ACTION 5: DT to write to WLGA (Neville Rookes) for information on Local Authority action for INNS.

- Developing Pathway Action Plans (PAPs) – the Zoo PAP is now available on the GB NNSS website (<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/index.cfm?sectionid=135>). A Welsh version will be available at a later date.
- Invasives Week continues to take place – date to be decided in 2017. Members suggested a slightly later week would be beneficial for presence of Invasives species. Group to look at actions for helping to promote INNS week in Wales at the Autumn/Spring meeting.

3. IAS Regulations

On 14th July, the European Commission published Commission Implementing Regulation 2016/1141 which implements the first of the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) of Union Concern. The list comprises of 37 species, some of which are present in the UK. More information on the IAS Regulations is available on the GB NNSS website [here](#). A FAQ will be produced (update: now available – circulated to members and see GB NNSS website link).

What will BREXIT mean for the regulations? Until the UK formally leaves the UK, it is a legal obligation to comply with the EU IAS Regulations.

A priority for WG to ensure regulations are brought into force, with the appropriate domestic legislation to be put in place (e.g. border controls, permitting). WG are working with colleagues across the UK to develop this legislation.

What does listing of these species mean? Strict restrictions will apply to all species e.g. no longer sold, transported, released into the environment etc. A permit scheme will be administered. Other actions include analysis of pathways, management plan/measures, and surveillance schemes. An opportunity for members to be involved in taking forward actions, members interested in being involved but useful to have a better idea of what species require actions within Wales, what action is underway for those species and for guidance from Defra at a working level.

ACTION 6: HY Identify species listed on the regulation known to be present in Wales.

4. GB Implementation Plan update

The Implementation Plan draft has been finalised and will be loaded on the GB NNSS [website](#) shortly. Actions taking place in Wales will feed into the Programme Board in Oct/Nov time.

Plan to be a standing agenda item – and look to develop a reporting mechanism to feed activity toward progress.

How can the group take forward?

- Facilitate and engage with delivery of actions?
- Communications role with key stakeholders? Refer to the media and communications plan which will be updated by the Media and Comms group under the Programme Board.
- Launch of the strategy and plan?
- Link to IAS Regulation actions as identified

7. Welsh INNS Priorities including Welsh marine INNS priorities

GW updated the group on work producing a list of Welsh marine INNS priorities, for input in the groups' Welsh INNS Priorities list and for the Welsh Marine Plan.

Process used to develop the list

- Updated marine INNS list in Wales using NBN gateway and NRW staff knowledge
- Identified/Prioritised those species listed on other mechanisms e.g. MFSD Monitoring and Surveillance list, W&C Schedule 9
- From this, ranked species in a table to identify the highly invasive and those requiring management e.g. using information identified in N2K project. Also looked at monitoring and surveillance needs. Top 'higher impact' species include Slipper Limpet, Mitten Crab, and Asian Shore Crab.

The list is in draft at the moment. Further details will be circulated in due course.

Marine list can be incorporated into the Welsh INNS Priorities draft, as updated by NA-L and Niall Moore. Should we have the same process/mechanism for updating the non-marine species as the marine has undergone? GW- the marine and fisheries branch provided resource to do this work. Welsh INNS Priorities list to be regularly reviewed.

ACTION 7: ALL members to provide any further comments on the draft Welsh INNS Priorities to **NA-L**

ACTION 8: GW to send **HY** the finalised marine priorities list when available for circulation and incorporation with the Welsh INNS Priorities

5. Work Plan subgroup feedback

The subgroup met on the 18th May in Cardiff to discuss the work plan. The old work plan has now expired, having run from 2013 – April 2016. It followed key priorities listed in the GB Strategy. The group found the work plan complicated and difficult to engage with.

High level priority areas for the group to be engaged with discussed e.g. Nature Recovery Plan, new GB Strategy and implementation plan, IAS regulations and associated legislation.

An opportunity has arisen for additional funding to support several staff at NRW to focus on INNS (See NRW update).

Advice will be provided from the Wales Biodiversity Strategy Board around the Nature Recovery Framework including clarification on the WBP Groups roles. Matthew Quinn, Director of Environment will discuss this with WBP group chairs at the next Chairs Group meeting. The Terms of Reference will require updating.

ACTION 9: DT update following the Chairs group meeting, for work plan to then be updated.

6. Evidence Gaps update

DTh is leading on Evidence Gaps for the group.

- Looking at how to progress work on priority species without associated EGs

- Investigating and reviewing what ongoing research is taking place on species listed, starting with aquatic invasive species.
- NB-B: Research on socio-economic impacts of INNS would be useful e.g. to feed into SoNaRR (State of Natural Resources report). DTh to add to register
- GW: NRW are looking internally at marine evidence priorities

Evidence Gaps can be suggested at any time – please send to HY or DTh.

8. Grey squirrel update

Update from Chris Tucker and paper provided by Fiona McFarlane, Forestry Policy Team at WG

A grey squirrel management action plan for Wales will be developed, as a requirement under the recent Woodland for Wales Action Plan 2015-20, and to meet obligations under the GB INNS Strategy and IAS Regulations. The Action Plan will be co-produced by WG and NRW, with input from a steering group of stakeholders. WG/NRW is hoping to form the steering group in autumn with a draft action plan to be presented to wider stakeholders for comments/discussion in spring 2017. Please contact Chris Tucker if you wish to put name forward for steering group to help input towards drafting the action plan.

The action plan will look to focus on a partnership approach to delivery based on existing initiatives. It will align with the Red Squirrel Conservation plan and link with projects as appropriate e.g. the Pine Marten reinforcement project in Mid-Wales is research on squirrel interactions.

NA-L: WTSWW are currently recruiting for a Mid Wales Grey Squirrel conservation officer to help deliver the Mid Wales Red Squirrel action and conservation plan.

9. Membership

DT received a recent request from David Hall, Environment officer at Cardiff Harbour Authority to join the group. David leads on INNS at the Authority and sits on the Aquainvad-ED training network. Group agreed membership.

Discussion around gaps in membership and the following organisations/sectors identified – National Trust, Farming sector, Commoners Association, Water and Energy industries (excl. Dwr Cymru), Construction industry (e.g. construction alliance).

Action 10: HY to update membership spreadsheet with sector (i.e. water, government, local authority)

Action 11: ALL to provide suitable contacts for gaps in membership (full or correspondence)

10. Partner updates

Partner update from Knotweed Control and action audit circulated with meeting papers.

Organisation	Highlights of updates provided verbally.
NRW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a long term NRW programme for INNS. Two key posts developed with WG funding – INNS Senior Policy Advisor and INNS Advisor. These posts will develop strategic INNS actions to support the

	<p>GB Strategy and EU IAS regulations, along with providing biosecurity communications, management tools and information. These are 1 year posts initially, which will be advertised internally and are open to external candidates via secondment only. HY circulated job application details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to survey Water primrose eradication site – last survey found none. Successful eradication can be confirmed from 4/5 years after its removal. Developed the PlantTracker app for the windows platform enabling NRW staff to access the app on their work phones. The app is available to download for iOS and android devices.
Dwr Cymru (RP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INNS management ongoing. Investigating reports of Piri-biri burr (expected to be a misidentification) Encouraging Dwr Cymru staff to log INNS sightings DCC are using weed wipers for treating invasive species and marginal reservoir vegetation with a tractor mounted weed wiper to minimise risk of affecting native species and impacting upon water quality. <p>UPDATE: <i>The company DCC have been working with for the trials are Logic and the unit used is the Concept 2000. The unit is adaptable to be used as a towable wiper set behind or offset from the towing vehicle, or mounted on a hydraulic arm with chemical tank on the tractor. See circulated document for further information – ‘Top Tips’ handout is provided for farmers and others who may be hiring the equipment and provides valuable information on use of herbicides. This has been produced jointly by DCWW and NRW. The unit would be suitable for Rush, Bracken, Thistle, Nettles and Docks as well as Ragwort, Himalayan Balsam, Knotweed and many other species.</i></p>
WTSWW (NA-L)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INNS management ongoing including Japanese Knotweed removal, grey squirrel control, Sika deer surveillance. Three-cornered garlic found on a nature reserve
Welsh Government LNF (DT, KC, AH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Practice for Species Control Provisions in Wales’s consultation has now ended. 14 responses were received. A summary of the responses will be produced, and the code amended as appropriate. Working on a welsh language version of the biosecurity e-learning package Update on the CABI Japanese Knotweed control project – psyllid released in 6 sites during second phase, 4 in Caerphilly and 2 in Swansea area. The first phase has shown psyllid is able to overwinter and has shown no adverse effects to the environment. Would like to continue project further, subject to funding Funding biochar project for Rhododendron removal into biochar to be put back onto clearance sites. Biochar research looking at use of Japanese Knotweed (different team). Members noted wouldn’t want to see JK being commercialised but unlikely as carbon level low (JK has hollow stems). Members noted the benefits if JK removed into biochar for a development sites. AS to keep the group updated as the project and research develops. UPDATE: <i>For clarification, at no stage in this project has commercialisation been suggested. It was not planned that the aboveground parts of the plant would be used for biochar, but rather the root system, that is woody, comprises over 65% of total biomass and frequently remains alive even following successful control of aboveground parts of the plant. This process would only be suitable for development sites.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WG are involved in a 4 year project, ending Oct 2016 with COBWEB and Snowdonia National Park Authority on the accurate mapping of Japanese Knotweed using a phone app. Agenda item for next meeting
WG Property (AS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with AH on Psyllid project. Continuing INNS management on landholdings – species identified through biodiversity audits. Raising awareness internally. Training within property group on latest policies, including INNS. Will follow up with briefings on the IAS regulations and implementations.
Cardiff University (JC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on crayfish interactions e.g. does the removal of signal crayfish pose any detrimental effects and on the invasive Pumpkinseed fish.

11. Any other business

Water Hyacinth – NRW are proposing a trial using Water hyacinth to remediate heavy metal contaminated water via a technique known as Phytoremediation in Swansea. Information on the trial was circulated yesterday and comments are welcomed. Initial thoughts are that Water hyacinth has been listed on the IAS Regulations. It is thought to not overwinter in the UK.

Action 12: Send further comments to **HY** or **Sean Hathaway** by 19th July.

12. Future agenda items and date of next meeting

Future agenda item suggestions:

- Communications focus – including partners work and resources, Invasives Week plan, link to GBNNSS communications (invite LC – GBNNSS)
- Cobweb – Snowdonia Japanese Knotweed survey project (Colin Chapman, WG)
- Cotoneaster control leaflets (Colin Cheesman, Plantlife)
- Standing agenda items: IAS Regulations, GB Implementation Plan, Group work plan.

Date of next meeting will be late November – 23rd or 30th November. JC offered use of rooms at Cardiff University.

Action 13: **ALL** please send any further agenda suggestions to **HY**

Action 14: **HY/DT** to arrange date and location of next meeting

13. Close