



Minutes

Name of meeting

Isle of Wight Council Environment & Sustainability Forum

Date and time

Thursday 16th January 2020 at 17.30

Venue

Conference Room 5, Floor 4 - County Hall

Attendees

Natasha Dix (ND) – Strategic Manager Waste & Environment (IWC)
Emily Crew (EC) – Waste Business Administrator (IWC)
Beth Fox (BF) – Trainee Project Manager (IWC)

Colin Rowland (CR) – Director of Neighbourhoods (IWC)
Chris Ashman (CA) – Director of Regeneration
Kayleigh Richter (KR) – Active Travel Officer (IWC)

Cllr John Hobart (JH) – IWC
Cllr Steve Hastings (SH) – IWC
Cllr Julie Jones-Evans (JJE) – IWC
Cllr Chris Quirk (CQ) – IWC
Cllr Ian Ward (IW) – IWC
Cllr Paul Fuller (PF) – IWC
Cllr Sarah Talbot (ST) – Fishbourne Parish Council
Cllr Alison Logan (AL) – Niton & Whitwell Parish Council

Ian Boyd (IB) – ARC
Claire Hector (CH) – ARC
Tanja Rebel (TR) – Transition Island
Dina Jung (DJ) – Bus Users Group
Roger Bartrum (RB)
Lester Slade (LS)
Judith Slade (JS)
Mary Mattocks (MM)

1.

Apologies

John Metcalfe
Cllr Charles Chapman
Nikki Wood
Tom Murphy
Colin Palmer

2.

Minutes from last meeting

Previous minutes agreed.

3. Questions from forum members

4. Presentation – Joel Bateman – IOW UNESCO Biosphere.

Presentation slides attached; key points:

- The whole Island is designated a Biosphere reserve. These designations are underpinned by United Nations and are global – 700 across the world.
- Stonehenge, Giants Causeway, Machu Pichu, Pyramids – all are held on same level of esteem, along with Geoparks.
- What is a biosphere reserve? They are a recognition by UNESCO of people and their local environment and how they move to do things in a more sustainable fashion.
 - E.g. Madagascar – sustainable fishing gave them designation.
 - Canaries – Timanfaya, Lanzarote – amazing biodiversity, volcanoes.
 - Maldives – Baa Atoll, needs of tourism are met while still conserving and enhancing the landscape.
- IOW has 140k residents but have an astonishing landscape. Our woodlands; as there are no wild deer the lower woodland is fantastic – has dormice, bats, red squirrels. Amazing geology. Diverse landscape. Many rare species in Britain are found here, with some only found on the IOW in Britain.
- The IOW has been a Biosphere Reserve since June 2019; there are 3 zones – core, buffer and transition. Core is the ‘best bits’, highly protected and also surrounded by highly protected, buffer zones are highly protected (approx. 70% of island is protected for conservation value) with the remaining areas transition.
<https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/eu-na/isle-of-wight>
- We are 1 of only 6 in Britain, or 7 if you count the Isle of Man.
- From a USP point of view, what are the benefits to the IOW?
 - Tourist point of view (Canaries make a big play over this)
 - Goods and products being promoted as biosphere products
 - Canada has food and film festivals based on biosphere.

- UN have 17 sustainable development goals to make the world a more sustainable place looking forward. From IW point of view – health and wellbeing, education, clean water, climate action, coastline, affordable energy, conservation of land being some that are achievable.



GOAL 1: No Poverty

GOAL 2: Zero Hunger

GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being

GOAL 4: Quality Education

GOAL 5: Gender Equality

GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality

GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

GOAL 13: Climate Action

GOAL 14: Life Below Water

GOAL 15: Life on Land

GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions

GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

- 'ACT NOW' – how can we do things better? AONB are currently working with Shademakers, and Platform 1 to create songs to take into schools looking at themes of sustainability.
- How can we help? Get involved with the 'ACT NOW' campaign. AONB have to report to UNESCO every 5 years to keep the biosphere status – tell us what you are doing, help us to show that this little Island can do splendid stuff. Budget, heritage lottery, big lottery, find pots of money to do good stuff but cannot do this in isolation.

Questions:

ST: How do other biospheres get money? JB advised in a number of different ways, for example Brighton and Lewes are funded by the local authority, North Devon is academic – funded through research grants from universities, Wales is paid for by the Welsh Assembly, Dumfries and Galloway by the local authority. The Isle of Man is funded by their government, their version of DEFRA. Spain is sometimes funded via waste management, sometimes by charities. So, all different.

RB asked if there were any tangible projects in pipeline? JB replied that they are looking at catchment farming, good road verge management. They are also trying to look at what the next 'big' heritage lottery programme will be as that will have greatest funding. Trying to get dark sky status for the south west of the IW. Projects can encompass health, sustainable transport – everything on the IOW could be a biosphere project – work with us!

JH commented that the IOW had a visit concerning AONB and a review? Have we had the outcome? JB replied that the Julian Glover review is out, it recommends a number of big changes, the biggest is doubling funding, getting rangers in to manage landscape, changing legislation underpinning AONB (duty of regard)

TR commented that what seems to be lacking is structure, this is peculiar as we cannot just wait for people to do things of their own free will, this should be government funded. We are still waiting for a good cycle network on the Island, all funding seems to be pumped into roads. If we really are serious this should be structured. DJ stated that she agrees, there is too much talk and not enough action. JB replied that he disagrees, we would not have been granted the status if we were not doing good things.

JJE advised that Newport have declared themselves the heart of the biosphere and set aside funding to get the message out about what the biosphere is, and how we can all do our bit. This is what we want to do for Newport, to get the message out. JB replied that this doesn't happen overnight, but this is what we want to happen. You can only make incremental changes over time. Good work leads to better work leads to best practice. JJE reiterated that it

takes time, needs proper funding, political will and the will of the people. CH commented that the investment community are waking up, Black Rock CEO has written to investors, if it's happening at that level where the money is then it will happen. IOW has great examples of best practice, but these are not recognised. We have brilliant models for the future

AL stated that she was concerned as people are not aware of what we are protecting. The IOW is very rural, but the land is destroyed, and our farming practices are horrendous. The farming system needs to be looked at, it is beyond sustainability, it needs to be regenerative – worried that we are protecting something that is already rotten, big changes are needed not little changes. JB advised that there is a catchment sensitive farming officer working on farming clusters in the East Yar Valley, but there is a need to understand that AONB is 2.5 people, we are trying to be part of the solution.

IB stated that while he understands concerns, it needs to be clear that there is so much being done. Cluster farming has been going on for years, there is a stewardship programme. DEFRA website has a register of agreements with landowners. There are quiet, patient, embedded programmes of change that have been going on for years. We owe Joel a massive vote of thanks for this designation; good things that are being done can be joined up because of the designation. There is practical work going on every day. The biosphere belongs to everybody.

LS asked if this includes stopping companies doing bad things like oil? JB replied that we have to work within the bounds of UK law. If it is not illegal the biosphere cannot stop it. The AONB deal with this via Planning applications e.g. wind turbines off the coast of the Island, made these comments to marine maritime organisation who were overseeing. We work within the bounds of the law. To say no to oil and gas, there is nothing in law we can pin it on. If it has landscape impact, we could say no on those grounds. ND clarified that when applications are submitted, they go through the planning process (TCP Act and core strategy) then representations will be made by AONB, Island Roads etc within the bounds of the act and that will be dealt with through the planning system. LS stated that surely, they could just be refused. IB replied that until there is a legal mechanism to say no, applications cannot just be refused.

JH commented that in reply to the query regarding what the government is doing to fund farmers, the recently passed agricultural environment bill specifically states 'public money for public good' – money for looking after soil, planting cover crops, planting hedges and trees – so farmers will be funded for these. Funding will be based on what farmers do to look after the environment. CH advised that there is a CLA meeting on 29th January. <https://portal.clahosting.org.uk/MY-CLA/Events/Event-Details/eventDateId/3384>

TR stated that we need to stand up and put a temporary freeze on

fracking. The Island needs to be a 5G free zone. If this is a UN dedication, UN law states the right to informed consent. CQ replied that if a frack free zone is declared, you give up right to a planning application, and a decision will be made by a planning inspector allocated by the government which could be detrimental.

IB urged everyone to engage with the biosphere, it is an extraordinary opportunity.

JJE extended thanks to JB for his work

5. **AOB.**

JJE mentioned the Green Impact scheme – this is a jointly funded programme for businesses to sign up to and make small changes. 65 businesses signed up last year, and it is being launched this week for year 2. Free to any business. Green Impact awards are made for the best collaboration and consultation. The scheme is working with the NUS for young people to go in and audit businesses. <https://www.greenimpact.org.uk/iw>

RB commented that the council has declared a climate emergency and needs to think about emergency policy making. A colleague asked if there will be any grants available, working on projects that connect communities to nature. JB invited them to talk to him to see if he can assist to find grant funding. CH said there is a lot of work already being done in this field on the island so may be worth going to talk to others

IB informed that Hullabaloo Festival will be held in Sandown on 15th/16th/17th May and issued an open invitation. This is a 2 day festival of science and arts, if anyone would like to present or use the event to carry out public questionnaires. For more information see: <https://www.facebook.com/hullabalooiw/>

CH mentioned that the IOW featured in The Guardian article for the top 20 alternative places to go on holiday due to the Biosphere. <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/jan/04/where-to-go-on-holiday-in-2020-alternative-hotlist-ethical-destinations>

PF mentioned the Footprint Trust. Currently 11% of Island households are in fuel property, the Footprint Trust can help people save money – call 822282 to arrange a visit. They can also help reduce carbon footprint. <https://footprint-trust.co.uk/>

TR stated that she likes the Footprint Trust, but not that they roll out Smart meters. TR further stated that Saturday 25th January is global 5G protest day and invited all to attend at Church on the Roundabout, 2-6pm.

DJ issued an invitation to the Bus Users Group meeting, at the

Methodist church, 11am Saturday 16th January.

CQ stated that for those concerned regarding drilling on the island, in terms of planning everyone can have their say via written objections, but they need to be based on the impact of drilling, not just saying 'I don't like this'. Objections need to be worded in terms of the impact it will have. Everyone has the opportunity to present at planning committee, groups can get together and have one person to represent the case they want presented to get the message to the committee.

JH advised that work on the English coastal trail continues, with results due half way through the year – there is an issue in the East Cowes/Wootton area, with talks continuing with English heritage and land owners. In terms of cycling – we are looking towards the Tour of Britain in September 2021 and are currently looking for investment. The event has huge television coverage, and the Island would be the final race in the tour. On the strength of this we could encourage investment in cycle paths. Work is currently being done on trying to get a route to West Wight on the old railway track. JH further added that he has seen that National trust are offering discounts to people who arrive on foot or by bicycle.

The next meeting will be Thursday 20th February 2020 at 17.30 – Conference Room 5, Floor 4, County Hall.

Presentation: Matthew Woodcock (Forestry Commission)