

**GB Non-native Species Media and Communications Working Group**

**Meeting 6, 18 January 2010**

**Room 640, Millbank, Smith Square, London  
11.00**

**Minutes**

**1. Attendance/apologies**

*Present:*

Angela Robinson - Scottish Government (Chair)  
Niall Moore - NNSS (Secretary)  
Lynn Beddoe - RHS  
Chris Chiverrell – CIRIA  
Keith Davenport - OATA  
John David – RHS  
David Gilchrist – HTA  
Chris John – British Waterways  
Emma Kiddle – Defra Comms  
Robin Payne - SNH  
Alison Smith - WAG  
Amelia Munn - Defra  
Mark Tollitt - Defra  
Scot Mathieson – SEPA (by tele-link until lunch)

*Apologies received from:*

Jo Long – SEPA (replaced by Scot Mathieson by telelink)  
Jim Collins - PCT  
Mark Owen - AT  
Jo Hughes - CCW  
Meinir Wigley - CCW  
Paul Walton - Wildlife and Countryside Link

AR welcomed all to the meeting and apologised for the short notice in organising the meeting which was due to the very short lead-in time for the aquatic plants PR campaign for which we wanted input from the group.

**2. Aquatic Plants PR Campaign**

EK summarised the Aquatic Plants Public Awareness campaign that is planned for launch on February 24. She outlined the aims and objectives of

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both the partnership marketing and PR aspects of it. KD welcomed the campaign and pointed out the help that OATA had already provided. He was thanked by the group for his speedy and extremely helpful contribution so far. AS suggested that the campaign needed to include professional institutes as well as trade associations. KD raised an objection to the juxtaposition of the economics report results and the aquatic plants campaign. DG agreed that this was potentially problematical and that we had to be wary of negative outcomes. This issue sparked discussion and the objection of KD and DG was noted. The group questioned EK on some of the details of the campaign.

DG warned about the use of personalities and to make sure that they were completely 'on message'. He suggested that Charlie Dimmock was potentially good as she has a background with ponds. CC suggested that we need to ensure we capture owners of large ponds including estates, business parks etc. KD indicated that he was highly wary of 'hero plants' but that we should stick to the composting message. DG suggested the need to stress the importance of correct management of ponds. The meeting agreed and suggested that this information could go in leaflets and possibly in the third poster. LB questioned the use of the phrase 'you could be breaking the law'. NM explained the background to its inclusion. KD stressed that the messages need to include positive messages and stress the importance of ponds for their biodiversity role [don't make ponds negative]. CJ questioned EK on who the 'creative' was aimed at. EK replied that the majority was aimed at pond owners. KD warned that the stickers should not be too difficult to remove. DG warned that the material needs to be sent to the right person. AS stressed that we need to target Local Authorities as they are often queried on issues such as composting.

AR informed the meeting that we need 9 regional case studies which detail local problems with aquatic plants. CJ stated that he could provide several such case studies and that Cumbria could also provide a good example.

***ACTION 1*** – *NM to circulate the details of the PR Campaign to the group including the co-opted members.*

***ACTION 2*** – *All to send comments on the PR Campaign material to EK.*

### **3. Media and Communications Strategic Plan**

AR informed the meeting that the strategic plan had been considered by the GB Programme Board at its September meeting and it was then approved, with thanks to the working group. One of the recommendations was that the working group should be re-convened and this meeting was a result of that recommendation. Coincidentally, approximately 200K became available from Defra (via the EA) to assist with a PR campaign related to the Water Framework Directive. CJ suggested that we really need more robust evidence on economic costs and biodiversity impacts for a range of species to help persuade people of the need for action. AS agreed with this.

The group discussed priorities and decided that Training was a key one that should be progressed. The group agreed to the establishment of a sub-group, chaired by Olaf Booy (NNSS) and the following members volunteered: RP, DG, AS. The following were also suggested as possibles for being co-opted onto the sub-group: Max Wade (RPS) and Field Studies Council.

On other priorities the group agreed that it was key to maintain momentum on the aquatic plants campaign after this financial year. It was also agreed that Anglers were a sensible next priority, especially in the aftermath of the aquatic weeds campaign and with the ILFA consultation and Marine Bill imminent as possible hooks. KD also suggested that the Companion Animal Code of Practice should be included in this highlighting the message that release of any pet animal is cruel. The group agreed that the NNSS should send monthly alerts to all members asking for suggestions for media opportunities.

KD suggested that the chair of the Media and Comms. WG write to LANTRA encouraging them to include an INNS component in their guidance. AS

agreed. Other suggestions included making sure that synergies between PR messages and opportunities are joined up between Plant Health, Animal Health and the invasive species parts of government.

**ACTION 3** – *NNSS to send out monthly alerts to the working group to solicit suggestions for media and comms opportunities.*

**ACTION 4** – *AR to write to LANTRA encouraging them to include INNS in their curriculum.*

**ACTION 5** – *NM to talk to Plant Health at Fera to assess scope for synergies between messages and campaigns.*

#### **4. Local Forum Workshop**

NM informed the group that a workshop was being held on 25/26 January with representatives of local groups carrying out action against INNS. This was being paid for out of the WFD 'pot' of money and its aims were to get views from local action groups on how we can help them in their work and how they can best input into the implementation of the GB strategy.

CC suggested that we should not forget IDBs, Large Estates and Local Authorities. The group agreed that this was best dealt with as part of the Training Sub-group's remit.

#### **5. AOB**

AS sought views on the issue of the refusal of mortgages to some householders in Wales due to Japanese knotweed being in the vicinity of the property. The group agreed that this was a potentially serious issue but that the Media and Communications working group was not the best placed group to take this forward. However CC agreed to talk to contacts at the ABI (Association of British Insurers).

#### **6. Date and Location of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in London in June or July.

**ACTION 6** – *NM to circulate dates for the next 2 meetings of the group.*