

National Biodiversity Network Trust

Board of Trustees

MINUTES: 6 July 2016 11am – 3.00pm



Darwin Centre 8th floor, Natural History Museum, London

Present:

Professor Michael Hassell (Chair)
Paul Rose
Helen Wilkinson
Roddy Fairley
John Davy-Bowker
Richard Pywell
Andy Clements
Tim Hill
Jo Judge
Tom Webb
Andrew Wood

In attendance:

Sarah Hyslop (*Minutes*)
Mandy Rudd (Representing ALERC)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ian Owens, John Davy Bowker, Mark Diamond, Alan Stewart and a rep from MBA.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Jo Judge was welcomed to her first Board of Trustees meeting.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

2.1 Minutes of the last meeting

1 July 2015

AP2: A session for Board Members be arranged to discuss the uses of the data certificates

Action: On agenda – DISCHARGED

3 Nov 2015

AP3: JS to follow up with HW on bulk permission agreements.

Action: CARRIED FORWARD – HW to give details to new CEO

AP4: JS to work with GS on development of membership review paper.

Action: On agenda – DISCHARGED

AP5: AW to lead working group for membership review.

Action: On agenda – DISCHARGED

24 Feb 2016

AP1; To follow up restoring NBN links with Kew **ACTION RS/ Kathy Willis**

Action: DISCHARGED – KW to give key note lecture at the NBN conference in November. GBIF mtg was held at Kew and JJ has met with her. Elspeth at RBGE is also a link here.

AP2; The Board were asked to share and promote the release of the new NBN website via social media **Action: DISCHARGED**

AP3; To put forward any ideas of how to take forward matters from the working groups and how these can be fed back into the strategy

Action: DISCHARGED

AP4; To circulate the recorder motivation report to the Board **ACTION: RS**

Action: CARRIED FORWARD

AP5; Atlas hosting and developer costs and options needs to be explored in this coming year.

Action: On agenda – DISCHARGED

AP6; To take the management costs of the Gateway to the next FMC mtg for discussion. To also find out how long the current Gateway site can continue for before this expires.

Action: On agenda - DISCHARGED

AP7; Investigate the withdrawal of the OS survey access for LERC's

Action: CARRIED FORWARD

AP8; To review the 16-17 budget and take changes to FMC before taking to the Board for final approval and sign off.

Action: DISCHARGED

Clarification was provided as to why NE and BTO had stand in representatives for the February Board meeting. This was a one off situation with regards to reporting on specific items on the agenda. To note that Trustees are on the Board in their individual capacity.

The minutes were then signed off as a true record of the meeting.

4. Chairman's remarks

The CEO report deals with most of the current matters to be discussed.

5. Items of business from the Chief Executive

Chief Executive Report February 2016 (TTE16-02 Paper 1)

Please refer to the paper for the full detail.

To note that these papers were drafted after only one month in post.

Views from the CEO are that the Trust should have better documentation and more detailed project plans with clearly laid out decision making documents. Systems and processes will be looked at and put into place.

NBN Priorities for 2016-2017 (TTE16-02 Paper 2)

With limited staff at the Trust (6.2 FTE) there needs to be clear defined priorities so that urgent work and projects can move forward.

The Atlas platforms and move from the Gateway are key matters which will need addressing before the end of this financial year.

It was suggested that the membership review is aimed to be completed this financial year and to make this a priority.

Update on Atlas of Living England (TTE16-02 Paper 5)

The paper presents here options for development of the platform.

To note that the focus of the main development platform should be the overall countrywide Atlas with the individual countries having a separate platform created from this. To be mindful of not recreating work.

There are confusions over who owns the Atlas. Therefore NBN branding is required.

The aim is for open data with no access controls but views and needs of the network need to be considered by having a transitional phase.

NE are happy to have a transitional phase but need to have certainty that there is a move towards open data in a short to medium timeframe.

To note that the funding for the Atlas sits not just with NE but with the overall Defra group.

There is a need to see the financial details for this development.

To be mindful that the Gateway is not recreated by having a system full of access controls. To keep in mind that the Atlas should be simple and easier to use and manage.

To note that data currently on the AoLS is not on at capture resolution but blurred at 1km, 2km and 10km. To transition towards capture but in the meantime it is useful that data is available to view and further access can be requested by the data provider.

The Board reiterated the need for an open data policy. To also provide some clarity on open data and detail what this means to each provider.

AP1; To draft an open data policy ACTION: JJ and team

A project plan should detail the timescale for the transitional phase (of around 2-3 years *), how we will get there and how will we support data providers through this (i.e. assistance, training, funding etc) To have this plan in place before the next Board meeting. To also consider developer time and resources and finances available.

* Although not discussed at the meeting the consensus have agreed on by 2020

AP2; Draft a project plan for the transitional phase of the Atlas development and detail finances, timescales, actions, resources. ACTION JJ and team

To note that non verified data will be flagged.

A white list system of users could be a backup plan with the view to increase the users within the white list so that eventually all can see capture resolution data (if not sensitive – this will require its own functionality)

GiGL wont be able to use the Atlas system in order to fulfil their requirement to EA. This would be possible in time but would require a system in place in the interim.

Regarding branding of the Atlas – NBN does need to be there but to be mindful about the branding of each country platform at this time.

The development of the Atlas platforms could be passed on for others to use for individual platforms with work not having to be recreated. Funding received for this could then go back into developing individual requirements (e.g. Wales will require their Atlas in two languages) or developing the overall platform.

AP3; To have an item at the November to discuss open data and how this benefits the data providers **ACTION Board**

Next steps

- Speak to data providers - LRC's and NSS to facilitate the view to load data with a view to move towards open data with no access controls
- To start discussions and carry on with development work across Atlas platforms.

*To note an amend to paper – NRW does have an open data policy and supports this view but this project was community led.

UK Steering Group

There are potentially too many people on the UK Steering Group. This should include funders and data providers but with a limit on around 8 people. This will help to move forward the development of the Atlas.

Move from the Gateway

- The financial costs should we not meet the deadline are high
- Jo has a meeting with David Roy next week to discuss this and also hosting
- There is a possibility that an extension could be granted of around 3-4 months but this will need agreement very soon to ensure that the rates are lower than advised.

Atlas Platform Updates (TTE16-02 Paper 6)

Please see the paper for the full detail.

The Atlas platforms are progressing for Scotland and Wales. A meeting will be arranged with NIEA. Other Atlas platforms are being suggested such as RGBE/NHM – Herbarium, London and Isle and Mann. Individual Atlas platforms would require some contribution to funding which could be used for individual development or toward hosting, front end development.

A potential funding bid could be submitted for a large community led project which could be attractive and link to the HLF bid.

Technical Leadership and Management of the Atlas (TTE16-02 Paper 5)

This paper lays out the detail to move from the Gateway by the end of this FY.

JNCC would like to transfer the funds and ownership of the Gateway / Atlas to the NBN. Work will need to be done to facilitate this transfer and look at mechanisms and agreement documents. The current MoA includes the 3 country agencies (NE, SNH and NRW) along with JNCC. All parties feel that this money would sit better with the NBN. There are some complications such as the transfer of funds and also VAT as this is currently nil but the NBN would be liable for this.

AP4; To start conversations with agency contacts on the transfer of funds for Gateway / Atlas from JNCC to the NBN

ACTION JJ and team

There is a real need to expand developer knowledge for this Atlas and hosting options need to be clearly resourced. Further discussions are required here. The Microsoft grant for the AoLS expires at the end of December 2016.

Google / Microsoft may be able to assist with providing hosting – talks to be had here. Microsoft Research Cambridge could be a way in.

Links are also being made with Experian (a credit check company based at Nottingham) as there is a link through to data and it may also be possible for them to provide assistance with hosting.

AP5; To discuss with BTO possibility of assisting with hosting. **ACTION JJ/CSIRO**

Communications Report (TTE16-02 Paper 4)

This paper is for information purposes.

The main point to note is the lack of nominations received for the NBN Awards – closing data 31st July. A suggestion was made that those who nominated last year could potentially roll forward to this year as the standard was so high.

Membership Review (TTE16-02 Paper 8)

To clarify that it is not the intention to delay the membership review after this FY. The feedback received to date is that there is no appetite for fees to change but that the scheme is not fit for purpose.

There is a need for real tangible benefits for the scheme which has always been an issue.

To also look at Board governance alongside this review.

Possible benefits

- Provides access to the network and the NBN as a whole
- To have targeted benefits for each scheme from LRC's to NSS
- To be able to input into the data principles such as use, access
- On board with the end goal of preserving nature – buying into the strategy and vision
- Key benefit are the Atlas platforms
- NBN helping to facilitate where required – mobilizing data, backend support for smaller schemes

To rename the main funders to affiliates / champions and these to sit outside of the membership scheme. The commercial sector such as Microsoft and Google could also be involved in this way.

Part of this review is to ensure that funding is diversified and not reliant on the government funding.

Data providers should also gain access to membership and benefits.

AP6; To give approval and any comments such as possible benefits to AW/GS as soon as possible so that the scheme can be worked upon prior to wider consultation. **ACTION Board**

Chief Executive Report February 2016 (TTE16-02 Paper 1)

GBIF participant node

The Board gave full approval for the NBN to be the UK node for GBIF. This is completely in line with the NBN strategy and should not require much additional work.

Risk Register (TTE16-02 Paper 9)

FMC have added a residual risk rating column with details. At present the residual risk is the same as the risk rating. All risks are currently high as this reflects the current situation with regards to moving to Atlas platforms. The mitigation should start to kick in around 6-9 months time.

Finance Report for Period 4 (TTE16-02 Paper 10)

The report shows that we came in on track as expected for 15-16 with the main reason for variance being the £50K received from NRW for Atlas development which will take place in 16-17. Also CEH paid in advance for membership for 16-17.

To note that there are two errors on page 2.

6. Conference income – the variance should be £195 rather than £2983

14. Meeting costs – the variance should be £886 rather than £7165

Financial Audit 2015-2016 (TTE16-02 Paper 11)

Please refer to the paper for the full detail.

We are now in the final stages of having the donated services audited. It is expected that these final checks will be completed in the next week with the accounts and audit report then being signed off.

The Charity Commission will be notified once we have the completed accounts.

AP7; To inform the Charity Commission of the error with the NBN accounts and seek their advice. **ACTION SH**

The Board agreed that we should look to go back and re audit the past couple of years accounts. This will be subject to a maximum cost of £1500 + VAT with the current auditors Brooks Mayfield.

Liability was discussed and although there is a potential claim here discussions with Barker Maule have not been forthcoming and persisting with this matter could result in further costs with lawyers.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (TTE16-02 Paper 12)

This requires some review in light of current discussions with clear costs and figures added.

NBN Business Plan (TTE16-02 Paper 3)

Some updates have been made to the business plan to focus on the key priorities as detailed above. The membership review will be moved back as a priority for this FY.

The Data Verification, Data Flow and Online Recording along with the Membership Review working groups are progressing well. These could have a slot to feed back at the workshops at the NBN conference in November.

These working groups need to have realistic and tight deadlines to ensure that they progress during the year.

It was agreed that the other remaining working groups should be put on hold until the next FY. The secretariat can help more with logistics and provide support for the groups.

There is an issue with interaction between the Verification, Data Flow and Online Recording groups and as they are so closely linked it would be beneficial to merge these three groups.

Data Holding Certificates

A discussion took place around the Data Holding Certificates with feedback noted below;

Andy Clements – BTO

These were developed quickly without data providers being able to get their house in order but that was positive in that it highlighted the good and bad points to allow improvement to be made and decisions to be made.

A good idea that should continue going forward. Hope to see some improvement on this years certificates.

BTO data transfer – a trial platform needs to be developed by CSIRO which will take around 2 weeks of Dave Martin's time. A further 2 weeks will then be required by Andy Musgrove at BTO to test the data. This data can then be fed into the Atlas. This has to be completed by the conference in November as there will be a reputational risk if this hasn't happened. This highlights that fact that we need other Atlas developers who can assist with this work.

Mandy Rudd – GiGL

Appalled by the visibility rating and inspired GiGL to raise these stats for this coming year. Contact was made with the data owners to implement better understanding and responses which was a positive outcome. Local Record Centers could mirror this and used to hopefully inspire local data flow.

Data Holdings for 2016

The Board agreed that we should ask data providers if the certificates can be made available publicly on the NBN website.

AOB

Nottingham in Parliament Day

The NBN will be taking part in this event in October 2016. There will be involvement from a variety of Nottingham based companies with activities and workshops taking place throughout the day. There are plans to showcase the Atlas and have the NHM ID Trainers run a bug hunt session and show the data flow by inputting data.

AP8; To give suggestions on who we can invite to the Nottingham in Parliament day and advise if you would like to be involved in this event. **ACTION Board**

A group who could be invited to this event are those who gave Sir John Burnett lecture talks at the past NBN conferences.

Conference sponsorship

The secretariat are actively seeking conference sponsorship for this year's event. A conference sponsor leaflet has been devised and is being distributed to potential sponsors. This will be sent to the Board if this could be shared via your contacts.

Letter to Liz Truss

This will be put on hold until September when we have a clearer position of government.

Mark papers as confidential

All papers should be marked as confidential as they are working documents and do not require making publicly available at this time.

7. Date of next meeting

9th November 2016

15th February 2017

5th July 2017

Signed:

Chair _____

Date: _____

Action Points

AP3 from 3 November 201 Meeting

JS to follow up with HW on bulk permission agreements.

Action: JS/HW - CARRIED FORWARD – HW to give details to new CEO

AP4 from 24 February 2016 Meeting

To circulate the recorder motivation report to the Board

ACTION: RS – Carried forward SH

AP7 from 24 February 2016 Meeting

Investigate the withdrawal of the OS survey access for LERC's

ACTION: JJ

Actions from 6 July 2016 Meeting

AP1; To draft an open data policy **ACTION: JJ and team**

AP2; Draft a project plan for the transitional phase of the Atlas development and detail finances, timescales, actions, resources. **ACTION JJ and team**

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