National Biodiversity Network Trust

Board of Trustees

MINUTES: 8th November 2017

11am – 3.00pm

Darwin Centre 8th floor, Natural History Museum, London

Present:
Professor Michael Hassell (Chair)
Jo Judge
Andrew Wood
Roddy Fairley
Ian Owens
Andy Clements
Richard Pywell
Paul Rose
Helen Wilkinson
Mark Diamond

In attendance:
Sarah Hyslop (*Minutes)*
Mandy Rudd (Representing ALERC)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from John Davy Bowker, Alan Stewart, Tim Hill, Jen Ashworth, Tom Webb

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

These were recorded as a true record of the meeting.

Action Points

Actions from 22nd February 2017 Meeting

AP2: To contact the Public Records Office regarding data held at JNCC which has not been transferred to the Atlas from the Gateway.   **ACTION: JJ**
DISCHARGED; only government data is stored on the archive and there is no requirement for non-government data to be stored

Actions from 5th July 2017 Meeting

AP1: AP1: To detail whether the NBN Trust is lead and key organisations involved for this FY within the business plan (to match the information detailed on page 10)   **ACTION: JJ**
DISCHARGED; done and circulated to the Board

AP2: To ensure that we have adequate insurance to cover us for any liabilities with the consultancy mentioned in the MTFS.   **ACTION: JJ/SH**
C'FWD; insurance broker contacted to check possible situations where cover may be required.

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AP3: To have greater detail in the MTFS with regards to grants and which ones we may go for / include timescales / risks and likelihood.   **ACTION: JJ**
C'FWD; FMC have been feeding into the strategy and there are some amends required and the further detail will be added when revising

AP4: To develop criteria for what advertising we will accept and from whom.   **ACTION: JJ and team**
On agenda – needs further development if advertising is to be pursued

AP5: To give contacts details for resilient fund consultant and Digital Spring who can broker advertising on NGO websites   .   **ACTION: AC**
DISCHARGED

AP6: To arrange a follow up meeting of the Board review group for the end of July and look to have third meeting sometime in August.   **ACTION: Board review group**
DISCHARGED

AP7: To let Ellen Wilson know if you would like to be included in the Doodle poll for the SBIF working groups.
                                                                                                                        ACTION: Board

DISCHARGED

AP8: To consider if the NBN need a complaints procedure.   This should include involvement from the wider Network and not just down to the Trust.   **ACTION: JJ and team**
C'FWD; The team are currently looking into this and it will include a feedback procedure. To be reported on at the February meeting.

AP9: To send any further comments and thoughts on the Captivating and Engaging Working Group Update paper (TTE17-02 P15) through to Mandy Henshall.   **ACTION: Board**
DISCHARGED

4. **Chairman's remarks**

   The Chairman shared with the Board that the Board governance review group has continued to meet and this will be discussed further under item 6 on the agenda.

5. **Items of business from the Chief Executive**

Chief Executive Report November 2017 *(TTE17-03 Paper 1)*

Please refer to the paper for the full detail.

Highlights

- New Software Developer for the NBN Trust now recruited and will start 1st December. Reuben Roberts will be based from home in Shrewsbury following a relocation from South Africa. Reuben will be managing the NBN Atlas development. Reuben will be starting on a lower salary whilst he gets to speed with Java.   CSIRO will still be contracted to do some extra development work which has all been budgeted for.
- £23K in credits from Amazon received for hosting of the NBN Atlas via their philanthropic / non profit regime.
- Funding for development of the NI platform as well as BAU for Scotland, Wales has been secured but to date no funds have been received. This is being continuously chased.
- CEO gave evidence to the House of Lords select Committee on the NERC Act 2006. ALERC Board gave thanks for LRC advocacy at that meeting.
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- It was noted that there are now a lot of countries that have an Atlas platform such as Spain, France, Portugal, Argentina and Australia. Aside from the Australian platform the UK system is well ahead of the game. Thanks were given to the late John Sawyer in his decision to go with the Atlas platform.
- GBIF have a tracking system for how data is used and it is possible to see the link between the raw data through to papers. The scripts for this are already done so may be possible for us to develop from this.

AP1: To look at GBIF scripts for tracking data from the raw data through to papers.   **ACTION: JJ**

Strategic Aim 1

Display of unverified data on the NBN Atlas

The working group could not agree on the display of unverified data on the Atlas and if this should be displayed as standard so this will be taken forward to the NBN conference for a vote.

Submit a sighting

Discussions are underway for reinstating this feature on the NBN Atlas and the process would be for the data to go through iRecord for verification. This would be the route for upload by the general public as it is thought that most recorders would continue to send their records to the LRC / Wildlife Trusts / NSS.

Strategic Aim 2

Open Data Policy

Please refer to the paper **Open Data Policy (TTE17-03 P02)** for the full detail

There is a need to clarify the meaning of open data and ensure that the Network refers to this in the same manner.

Principle 1; open by default

As the NBN Trust does not currently generate any data, this will only apply to the ' Submit a sighting data' as it would be 'owned' by the NBN as they would be seen as the custodians of the data.

There is a need to link the open data policy with the sensitive species list (SSL) – i.e. if a species is on the SSL then this would automatically over right the open data by default.

We also acknowledge that some data might not be open right away and this will always be down to the data provider.   NBN can help to promote open data but ultimately it's down to the data provider.

It is noted that we have made a good transition from where we were on this subject but that it could take some time yet to fully get to the open data by default position.

Principle 3; Standardisation of formats and terminology

Appreciate that all recorders have different ways of collecting data and there will be various processes and standardisation for all ways of collecting data – not suggesting that they are all pin holed into one process.

NRW are using a gold ratings system at the moment which might be useful for scoring data as it makes it clear what you are looking at right away.

Strategic Aim 3

Please refer to the paper **Communications (TTE17-03 P11) f**or the full detail and this will be discussed under item 7.

Strategic Aim 4

NBN Atlas Update

Please refer to the paper **NBN Atlas Update (TTE17-03 P03)** for the full detail

Country portals

Isle of Man will soon have a working Atlas.

NI have now confirmed that we don't have to go through the access security checks and so hopefully the funds will be released to us soon so that development can begin to ensure a working Atlas by the end of March. Funds would need to come in by the end of January if we are to meet the deadline of end of March.

Statistics

There are now 217 million records on the NBN Atlas, 2 million records have been updated and 2 million new records uploaded.

To note that the results for percentage of records under each licence are somewhat skewed due to the large amount of BTO data which is on at a CC BY NC license.   To also bear in mind that the peak of approx. 76,000 new users for August is due to the BBC article of Japanese Knotweed

To note that the average session duration of 276.35 seconds is sufficient to perform a search, download records etc.

AP2: To compare the average session duration of 276.35 seconds / 4.6 minutes to any other comparable sites such as ALA, BTO and GBIF.   **ACTION: JJ**

The NBN Atlas could be seen as a way of signposting users to the data providers for further access to data which is not available at a higher resolution on the NBN Atlas itself.

NBN to be at the forefront of facilitating uses which would be data derived products and not just the raw data. It is important to have the derived product for the data when searching so that decisions can be backed up on what was available at the time.

This area would be a good topic for the new stakeholder group but would require input from LRC, NSS, Agencies and Developers.   To bear in mind access controls which will no doubt come up again during these discussions.

A possible product / service for the commercial sector could be the automatic loading of sensitive species which would enable speed and efficiency.

Strategic Aim 5

Breach of licenses

The paper details the process and criteria for accessing this support via the NBNT. The County Court system is quite straight forward.

The £2 million income limit is there as we assume that any organisations with an income over that amount would would be in a position to pursue this without   support. The intention is to ensure that the NBN has the resources, both in terms of funds and staff time, to support smaller organisations The NBN would of course still want to be informed of any breaches and can send out relevant joint letters.

We need to be clear about whether the £2 million threshold referred to the date partner themselves or to the organization that hosts the data partner. Many LERCs are hosted by Wildlife Trusts or Local Authorities whose income would be over £2 million.

Need to be clear in the policy who first looks at the case and then reviews the decision as it can't be the same person.

AP3: To see the split of members with an income over and below £2 million   **ACTION: JJ / GS**

AP4: To develop the breach of licenses policy further and expand on the appeals procedure.   **ACTION: JJ**

Progress against action plan

Please refer to the paper **Progress against action plan (TTE17-03 P04)** for the full detail

There are some actions that have been delayed due to the SBIF review but to note that this could actually help to move some things further once its competed. Should rephrase to show that the SBIF review is contributing to our progress not delaying it.

AP5: To add a rag system to the progress against action plan table which shows if we are on track and what information to home in on.   **ACTION: JJ**

Advertising Review

Please see the paper **Advertising Review (TTE17-03 P05)** for the full detail.

This paper follows on from the Medium Term Financial Strategy and gives more thought to having advertising on the NBN Atlas. The cost to manage could potentially be greater than the income we would receive. There is the option to have Google Double Click but this does change the way a website would be laid out and would impact on the look of the NBN Atlas.

Having CC BY NC data on the NBN Atlas but using the data commercially could potentially be a legal breach which might result in action being taken. See separate PDF document showing an example of a violation of the CC licence.

An example was shared regarding Birdlife advertising via Digital Spring and they received £60K per year in income.   To potentially speak to Birdlife to see if they found this worthwhile.

AP6: To look at the cost benefit analysis of advertising as there could be some options to progress with this.
ACTION: JJ, GS, FMC

The suggested plan for staff at the NBN Trust is that while SH is on maternity leave, GS would backfill this role as she has done so before and to recruit for a part time Office Admin type role and use the saving to employ an external fundraising consultant who could look to bid for money for certain projects. The expert should also be part of the stakeholder group. The Board would need to see how this would be managed with figures detailed.

Risk Register

Please refer to the paper **Risk Register (TTE17-03 P06)** for the full detail

The format of the register was discussed and the following changes should be made;

- To remove 'initial' from the first risk rating column – this is actually the risk as at today

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- The residual risk rating column should be – rating after mitigation
- To move the mitigation column over to the right so this sits alongside the rating after mitigation column and have the rating at today column alongside the strategic risk.

We should then see how the mitigation is bringing the risk rating down and have less red on the register.   The start of the stakeholder groups should help to deal with the diverging views risk.

AP7: To revise the risk register based on the comments by the Board and take this for review at FMC in January.
ACTION: JJ

6. **Board Governance Review (TTE17-03 P07)**

To refer to the full paper for the detail.

The plan is to advertise for the Trustees after the AGM and look to interview in January and have in place for the February meeting when both the previous and new Trustees would both be present.

It was noted that BTO are currently reviewing their council of 15 members are proposing a Board of around 9 with a staggered term and phased transition.

All Trustees are in support of the review and the proposed way forward.

The stakeholder group ToR annex lays out how this will work and link with the Board. It is proposed that there are around 15-20 people on said group which should represent the diversity of the network. The proposed Scheme of Delegation should mean that the Board doesn't get tied down with the detail.

The format was discussed and it was suggested that the stakeholder group should be formal with a Trustee being present so that there is a clear link back to the Board.   It was also suggested that the Board set the group tasks and actions to follow up on but also for this to be a place where the Network can genuinely feedback concerns and ideas.

To bear in mind the link to SBIF, working groups, Atlas steering groups etc and not to duplicate any work carried out by other groups.

At the AGM the members will be informed of the Board review and advised how the existing Trustees have been decided on i.e. based on the required skills / competencies and process / principles. They will also be voting on the new Articles for the Trust. There also needs to be some continuity for the FMC.

Chairman

MH is now into his 6th year and so looking to retire in the next year or so. This was discussed and agreed that the AGM in November 2019 would be the preferred option.

The scheme of delegation paper looks fine.

Lunch

The SBIF Review: briefing for the NBN Trustees – Ellen Wilson RSPB and SBIF Chair *(TTE17-03 Paper 10)*

Please see the separate slides which were presented to the Board.

Some key points are noted below;

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- Submitting data found to be confusing as there are lots of options for where to submit this to
- LRC's / NBN came out well
- All the results will go onto the NBN website
- 7 key drivers are detailed. The NBN fits into the central section.
- All services need an online platform
- The 'as is' model shows there is a loose level of governance between the groups
- To simplify the services and look to review how these are funded
- To think further about how this will be resourced going forward and what the transition will look like
- Around 30 people attended / attending each of the four workshops
- Ellen welcomes any input the Board may have into the funding workshop

6. Finance and Management Issues

Finance Report for Period 1 (TTE17-03 Paper P08)

The main variances are down to the subscription income. Since the paper was drafted JNCC and MBA have now paid. Outstanding income is from CEH and NFBR and these are continuously being chased.

The conference costs are likely to come in less than budgeted which will help with the under achieved income received from conference sponsorship.

BAU NBN Atlas income has been received from NE. SNH are due to pay this week and NRW/ Welsh Government have confirmed payment but not yet advised when this will be received. NIEA funds are still outstanding and are being chased on an ongoing basis.

The office move is on track but may come in slightly more than forecasted due to increased relocating costs but we will still be on for savings each year and it might be year two when these savings take full effect.

Draft budget for 2018-2019 (TTE17-03 Paper P09)

To refer to the paper for the full detail.

The FMC have been through and approved the budget, It is BAU with no scope for further work or development. The income relies on the MTFS taking effect.

The Board approved the budget as this stands.

7.   Information Items

Communications (TTE17-03 P11)

NBN Conference

174 have now booked as at yesterday. All award winners are attending the ceremony and some of them will have a demonstration on the Friday.

8.   AOB

MH thanked MD for his time on the Board as he now retires as a Trustee. MD will attend the February handover meeting.

9.   Mark papers as confidential

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The following papers will be marked as confidential

TTE17-03 P07 Board Governance
TTE17-03 Paper P08 Period 1 Finance report
TTE17-03 Paper P09 Draft budget for 2018-2019

7. Date of next meeting;

28th February, 18th July and 7th November

Signed:

Chair   _____

Date: _____

Action Points

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