

**Minutes of the Meeting of GreenSpace & the  
South West Parks & Green Space Regional Forum  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2004 2:00 p.m.  
Ashton Court Visitor Centre**

		<b>Actions</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Present</b>	
	<p>Chris Adams – West Somerset Council            Andy Chard – Bath &amp; NE Somerset Council            Peter Crompton – Bournemouth Borough Council            David Crudgington – Bournemouth Borough Council            Andre Curtis – Gardens for All            Carl Dallison – Weymouth &amp; Portland Borough Council            Sarah Drea – Gloucester City Council            Karen Dyson – Taunton Deane Borough Council            Paul Faulkner – Exeter City Council            Rob Hainsworth – Tewkesbury Borough Council            Nick Jones – Plymouth City Council            Janice Malarkey – West Somerset Council            Ruth Miles – Mendip District Council            Sarah Moore – Project Officer, Greenspace (minutes)            Chris Mulcahy - Taunton Deane Borough Council            Peter Wilkinson – Bristol City Council (Chair)</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	<p>Alan Barber – CABE Commissioner            George Damsell – Stroud District Council            Tim Dixon – East Dorset District Council            Matthew Smith – Bath &amp; NE Somerset Council</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	
	<p>1. Introductions</p> <p>PW welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies from those unable to attend. Introductions were made.</p> <p>PW outlined the agenda for the meeting.</p> <p>2. Background to GreenSpace and regional working</p>	

SM presented an overview of the current work of GreenSpace and historical background to the organisation. AC asked how the organisation is being funded now that major grants have ceased, SM explained that we're reliant on income from the services we provide. PW also explained that undertaking Living Spaces administration has brought benefits to the company. The regional work that GreenSpace is undertaking, explaining the strategic importance in terms of the objectives, benefits, and potential activities were outlined. A copy of the presentations is attached.

PW explained that GreenSpace has established a Directors Working Group to address regional development, and that quarterly meetings will be held with regional representatives. The benefits of meeting with colleagues, and that the Forums are a powerful method of taking issues forward were highlighted. PW also explained the CABI Space has validated GreenSpace's approach, and provided seed funding. PW explained CABI's interest in the Forums, and that they have allocated a member of staff to each Forum. Nicole Collomb, CABI Space enabling team is the contact for the South West region.

PW explained the importance of linking to RDAs and the Government Office for the South West. This will help to link to regeneration agendas, and campaign for the environmental agenda.

### 3. Case Study: London Parks & Green Spaces Forum

SM presented a case study describing the structure (organisational and funding) and achievements to date of the LPGSF. For more information, please visit [www.lpgsf.org.uk](http://www.lpgsf.org.uk)

### 4. Progress update from the other regions

SM presented an update of the regions. Copy within the first presentation.

#### **London Parks & Green Spaces Forum**

- LPGSF has been in existence for nearly two years.
- LPGSF is fully staffed with a co-ordinator and director.
- LPGSF funding structure differs from other regions, due to enhanced opportunities for funding in the London area. Strategic Partners formed the core of financial contributions to the development of the Forum, and Local Authority membership is being developed where contributions are £2K / year for 3 years commitment.
- For more information please visit: <http://www.green-space.org.uk/Network/lpgsf.htm> or [www.lpgsf.org.uk](http://www.lpgsf.org.uk)

#### **GreenSpace North West**

- Existing core members from AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities), who make up the existing steering group and provided funding for the appointment of an Officer, on secondment and

hosted by Stockport MBC.

- Fiona Mather in post as co-ordinator (Secondment ends April 2005)
- CABE Space grant used to provide a laptop and software, plus expenses for meetings. Remaining funds are likely to be spent on publicity material.
- Local Authority visits undertaken, with consultation questionnaire.
- Research report produced from the consultation findings.
- Launch event held 7.7.04 at Manchester Town Hall. Including presentations from PB and Alan Barber, plus workshop session around themes, and skills assessment undertaken.
- Next steps are to secure full funding for April 2005, and appoint Steering Group. Membership Agreements are being circulated to local authorities in the region to secure funding from April 2005.
- Terms of Reference agreed.
- GreenSpace agreement agreed.
- Promotional material, grant and local authority funding development ongoing.
- Meetings held with Groundwork to discuss their involvement and financial contributions to the Forum.

#### **North East Forum**

- Two meetings held, and the Forum will meet independently of GreenSpace in September.
- Draft Terms of Reference have been circulated for comments.
- RDA approached for seed funding.

#### **East Midlands Forum**

- Three meetings held, with the next meeting planned for 13.10.04
- Funding structures have been circulated for comments.
- Terms of Reference, Agreement, and consultation questionnaire to be agreed.

#### **West Midlands Parks Forum**

- Forum is emerging from an existing group 'West Midlands Parks Forum'
- Developing an ambitious range of activities.
- Website commissioned.
- Further meetings to be held to discuss partnership and work programme.

#### **South West Forum**

- Initial meeting held 9.9.04
- CABE Space to host a training event on Green Space Strategies on 18.11.04 at the Thistle Hotel, Exeter

#### **Other Regions**

- Interest from individuals and organisations in the Yorkshire & Humberside, South East and East of England region.

- It is anticipated the other regions will begin the development process in September.
- Key regional contacts attended an initial GreenSpace Regional Meeting in August.

### **Country-Wide Forums**

#### **Northern Ireland Forum**

- Initial meeting held to discuss the purpose and scope of a Forum for the province.
- Event proposed.
- Representative to attend GreenSpace Regional Meeting in August.

#### **Scotland Forum**

- Ongoing discussions and links to Green Space Scotland.

#### **Wales Forum**

- Existing Forum representatives to attend a meeting to discuss their progress, priorities and potential links to GreenSpace.

### **5. South West Parks & Green Spaces Forum**

PW asked if everyone felt that there was a need for a Forum in the region, and said that ideally people would have time to think about it after the meeting. PW asked for comments from each delegate, this are summarised below:

PF asked the question of what the group would like. He said he would like more contact with sector professionals, and stated that local political support is good at his Authority. PF mentioned that there was a group in Devon that looked at CCT issues which has now disbanded. Therefore he felt that it would be good to have Forum to talk through issues. Ideally national news would be reported, and local networking enabled.

CA again felt that they work remotely and would like contact with other sector professionals.

AC said that his organisation 'Gardens for All' are consultants for the NHS grounds, and that he has various good practice relating to their work. He felt that in terms of membership to the Forum, it would be useful to reach organisations that manage land that aren't local authorities. For example, hospitals and parish councils are not in the custody of traditional parks departments.

AC would like a more strategic approach to working, as opposed the current reactionary services. He also felt it's important to develop clear standards, and create collective knowledge. PW agreed that he's aware that that they don't network enough and have begun working with former

Avon Authorities North Somerset Council, South Gloucester and Bath & North East Somerset.

SD felt that sharing information would be an important function of the Forum. SD found that they're efforts to gain funding from other sources were successful but they require help on the operational aspects such as setting up a Café. PW agreed that there would be local good practice, enabling people to visit projects, and understand the potential benefits and pitfalls.

CM is keen to talk to others in the area, and highlighted the work of ABSEA as a benchmarking group, and highlighted the benefits of enabling them to discuss issues. NJ agreed that ABSEA provides useful evidence, however the benchmark authorities were mainly in the North. PC mentioned that they involved with the ABSEA coastal cities; others in the group are also involved. RM agreed that a benchmarking group would be useful.

DC felt that the Forums are a great idea and would like to support it. DC offered to inform others in his area of the South West Forum.

CD found it reassuring to hear similar reports, and said that Forums were useful e.g. in relation to CCT in the past.

NJ said that he would like to be involved and that it was good to link to GreenSpace and CABE Space to keep the momentum going. He felt it important that the Forum has clear objectives to push forward and use it as a vehicle to link to the Government Office for the South West to get more funding into parks in the region.

RH agreed that it would be useful to have a one-stop-shop for help and support. He mentioned that there was a group in Gloucestershire that had disbanded.

KD highlighted a wide remit within the Borough for green space (sports & arts) and they involve the elected members in projects. KD said that there are two levels of information such as the operational information (e.g. roundabout sponsorship value) and more strategic information (e.g. section 106 agreements). KD felt it would be useful on the advocacy side, to reach corporate agendas through cross-cutting agendas, and provide evidence for members.

CM mentioned the potential benefits of sponsorship.

PW summarised that it seemed clear that those present at the meeting are keen to set up a Forum. PW went onto report that he feels that Bristol is doing reasonably well with advocacy at the moment, but there is still some way to go and it would be good to link to the RDAs & Government Office for the South West, to see how regional working can make a difference to Bristol. Bristol parks benefits from executive leader support.

	<p>Bristol museums have been successful, as a regional museum 'hub' and this could transfer to other leisure activities in the region.</p> <p>a) Terms of Reference</p> <p>PW outlined the initial draft terms of reference, which were tabled by SM and based on the emerging Forums. It was explained that this requires working up to relate to the South West region. SM explained that the key areas for discussion include the Mission, Aims &amp; Objectives, scope and areas of concern. SM explained that the areas of concern could be informed via a consultation questionnaire, as with the other regions. PW suggested that everyone considers the draft document, and return any <b>comments to SM by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October.</b></p> <p>A discussion ensued on the geography of the South West region, and the potential difficulties of people having to travel vast distances for meetings. It was suggested that area meetings could be held, and DC and CA suggested they could meet and inform other local authorities in their counties.</p> <p>PW mentioned we need to work on the potential added benefits of being a Forum member, as well as a GreenSpace member, and would like to see the added value. SM will devise a benefits document.</p> <p>PW mentioned that the LPGSF took the approach of appointing a co-ordinator. A discussion ensued about the potential of establishing an executive group, and the appointment of a co-ordinator. PF suggested that when business matters have been agreed it would be good to appoint a co-ordinator, as past experience suggests that groups disband and a co-ordinator would assist to keep things moving. The group agreed the appointment of a coordinator as a priority.</p> <p>b) Funding Structures</p> <p>PW outlined the regional distribution of GreenSpace membership, and SM circulated copies. PW reported that having discussed a possible pricing structure with SM; for example based on population size that it was difficult to ask Authorities to fund at that level. Bristol could not afford membership based on the existing brackets. PF mentioned the potential difficulties of justifying payments to a Forum to portfolio holders. KD mentioned that it might be possible for local authorities to fund a part-time post, supplemented with the grant from CABE Space. PW suggested that the Countryside Agency and Groundwork may be able to supply funds, plus other grant programmes such as the ODPM Special grants programme. SM mentioned that some comparative work would have to be undertaken to identify and justify their involvement, as with the other regions.</p>	<p>ALL/SM</p> <p>SM</p>
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4.	Date of Next Meeting	
	<p>To be arranged.</p> <p>CABE Space training – Preparing Open Space Strategies. 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004, Thistle Hotel, Exeter. SM will liaise with CABE Space, who are arranging the event to invite two officers per Authority.</p>	SM