

**Minutes of the Meeting of GreenSpace South West
Tuesday 19th June 2007 at 1pm
Livestock Centre, Exeter**

		Actions
1.	Present	
	<p>Richard Taylor – Torbay Council Lindsay Evans – Torbay Council Bob Hussey – Kennet DC Paul Faulkner – Exeter CC Hasnein Kanani – Mid Devon BC Peter Wilkinson – Bristol CC Keith Rennells – South Hams DC Tim Pollard – South Hams DC Nick Jones – Plymouth CC Adrian Cook – Mid Devon BC Naomi Wright – Natural England Ben Ward – Play England Harley Cook – Sedgemoor DC Andy Chard – Bath & North East Somerset Council Lorraine Montgomery – Teignbridge DC Sarah Moore – GreenSpace Frances Mangan – Gloucester CC Brendan Stone – North Somerset DC Jane Hembrow – Play England</p>	
2.	Apologies	
	<p>Michael Rowland – Bournemouth BC Sarah Finch-Crisp – Swindon BC Alan Barber – CABE Space Mark Pollard – East Devon DC Karen Hughes – Taunton Deane BC</p>	

3.	Meeting	
1.	PW welcomed the meeting and the new attendees, including Ben Ward from Play England. He then reviewed the agenda.	
2.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and progress update The minutes of the last GreenSpace South West Meeting, held on 12/12/06 were agreed. Page numbers to be added.</p>	JL
3.	TAES	
3.1	PW updated the group on TAES as used by colleagues in Cornwall at Carrick DC. It is based on a performance model for cultural services for the parks sector. It is now signed off by IDEA and CABE Space, and Bristol City Council will be taking it forward in September along with other core cities. It will consist of an assessment tool, followed by a peer review. No one else in the group is currently adopting it but core cities are hoping to adopt it.	
4.	LAA Update	
4.1	<p>AC: B&NES have secured a stretch target of 3 GFAs. They have got 1 and applied for 2 more. RT: Torbay have increased their number of GFAs but they did not get the stretch target that they requested. ACook: LAA in Mid Devon is not for Parks & Open Spaces; LAAs are around complaints answered. 80% are answered at the source and passed directly onto the ground staff. Frances Mangan: Gloucester don't have an LAA but she will check and feed back at next meeting.</p>	
4.2	<p>BobH: Kennet are in the process of a Unitary bid and and LAA plans have been accelerated, so districts will want to work together. They are being controlled by senior management and starting to filter down. The benefit to the Forum of this is that Bob can identify other Wiltshire contacts. HC: Somerset LAA is themed on children's play, in direct links with active health. KeithR: Unsure about LAA at South Hams; will feed back at next meeting.</p>	
4.3	<p>BS: North Somerset LAA is not for Parks & Open Spaces but it is being delivered. NJ: £0.5m has been given to increase provision in 3 areas in the city as part of the play and health agendas. Unsure if case authorities.</p>	

<p>4.4</p>	<p>PF: Exeter doesn't work to an LAA; they have targets but no cash incentives that link to their BVPI</p> <p>PW: Bristol has secured targets for poor neighbourhoods and the 10 worst parks, with performance awards of up to £800k, although they may only get 25% of the award.</p> <p>Village Greens: PW: There have been 3 applications in Bristol to designate village greens. BCC is supported by the Open Space Society. FM requested more info. RT: There has been 1 application from Torbay but it has been turned down. AC: There have been some issues in Mid Devon of a village green being sold off but the application was refused.</p>	
<p>4.5</p>	<p>Following the Parkforce presentation, Michael Rowland exchanged emails on whether or not staff should be police checked; especially grounds maintenance, unless they have strong objections there should be a police check: this is a child protection vs accountability issue. In Bath & NE Somerset all staff are CRB checked.</p>	
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>Feedback from the GreenSpace National Forum</p> <p>SM gave an overview of the National Forum for the benefit of new members. The Action Plan has been circulated and extra copies were circulated at the meeting. The Action Plan has been signed off by all the Regional Chairs.</p> <p>The 4 Action Plan Aims are:</p> <p>Capacity building: To provide a support network for the development of individual regions</p> <p>Working strategically: To work strategically at all levels through the GreenSpace National Forum</p> <p>Influencing policy & change: To influence national policy and establish a think-tank for green space issues</p>	
<p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>Learning: To improve knowledge and develop skills by coordinating GreenSpace forums</p> <p>Funding has been secured from DCLG for the purpose of: staffing, reviving the Community Network and building the Regional Community Forums. SM will be seeking 50% match funding for each of the regions, to fund forum manager posts.</p> <p>SM to create a list of names and organisations that are currently represented on the SW network.</p>	<p>SM</p>

<p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p> <p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Ben Ward inquired as to the key messages to government from the forums. PW listed these: Funding Statutory PIs; aim is to influence the next rate of PI Links to GFA GreenSpace planning, strategy and pressure on growth points. GSNF seeks to encourage influence of the regions. CABE Space have focused on promoting capital funds, and there has therefore been a lack of revenue funding available.</p> <p>GSNF: Helen Phillips at Natural England has been sent a letter to request Lucy Heath to attend all meetings. ISPAL: GreenSpace are avoiding press on this. There is confusion over the role of ISPAL. They are doing a similar roadshow on GFA, but generally everyone is unsure what is happening with them. PB presented at GSNF on the GreenSpace Passport (now renamed GreenSKILL), whereby the learning needs of staff can be linked to compare core training and produce a CV. The system will be up and running later this year, and there is interest in capturing job descriptions. All to supply job descriptions to paulb@green-space.org.uk.</p> <p>Linked to this work, Lantra is launching a new diploma for 16-19 year olds who want to get into land based disciplines. If anyone is looking at apprenticeships, see Diploma 16-19. PF worked with Lantra as they have an apprenticeship scheme. Lantra talked to Exeter on where they wanted to go. Having spent time with them, it was difficult to get the info out of Lantra. In future there should be a comprehensive framework. RT mentioned that the syllabus looked good. PW made links between Passport and the Diploma. View info on the diploma at www.diplomalbe.co.uk. Martin Callow – see GSNF minutes. PW mentioned the GFA consultation questionnaire carried out in the NW Forum. SM said that this questionnaire may be rolled out through the regions, more information to follow.</p> <p>Sub-Regional Groups</p> <p>It was suggested that the county representatives create sub-regional county-wide networks. It was acknowledged that this would be difficult as there are both unitary and 2-tier authorities in the SW, although it has been possible elsewhere. SM suggested that the CLG money could be used towards a post</p>	<p>ALL</p>
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6.2	<p>to work on increasing membership. Further CLG money and funding grants may also be available; in the East, EEDA has provided a grant for GI/Climate change. PW pointed out that the CLG money is not guaranteed, and they want to see regional bids.</p> <p>Naomi Wright is championing the cause of the SW forum and a GSSW development manager post. Defra realignment of budgets means that funding that was agreed has been taken away – this was originally £30k but now it is £15 and even that may not be available. NE are trying to get their funding fixed. Targets for GSSW – the project hits many targets within the strategic direction of NE. They have always supported it, and Lucy Heath sits on the GSNF, they are still keen but it is difficult within the new structures. NW is confident that by March 2008 there will be a grant of some kind. The reality will be bedding it in and working together.</p>	NW/SM
6.3	<p>PW said that there is still a challenge ahead, and that this post should be set with a £40k budget.</p> <p>NW and SM to work together electronically to identify links to Green Infrastructure.</p>	
6.4	<p>NW said that NE are working with CLG on an Action Plan to enhance green spaces. This is a positive message in terms of support for green space nationally. This will improve links through planning, growth and strategic planning as well as LAAs. NW also said that Natural England are working with Sustainability SW, based in Bristol, on An Urban Green Space Network, a sustainability campaign. GSSW would be a potential partner for this. The timetable is being developed, NW to pass to SM to circulate to the network.</p>	NW/SM SM
6.5	<p>PF pointed out that there is a current shortfall, and asked how this will be made up. SM highlighted the membership pricing structures. SM to produce a pricing schedule with population, size and membership options, and circulate along with membership benefits. If the benefits of membership need to be communicated, letters can be sent to directors. All to request letters from SM if necessary. PW to draft letters. SM to send Frances Mangan SW ToR and Benefits.</p> <p>BH suggested that payment for this year must be made, and letters sent, by the September budget round.</p>	ALL PW SM NJ SM
7.	<p>FM asked about influencing organisations and providers. PW said that further education colleges are competing for students. NJ said that he is keen on this area, and asked to circulate a</p>	

7.1	questionnaire. NJ to lead a Training Working Group. SM to pass NJ learning from MW Training Working Group. PW suggested buying in bulk for training.	
7.2	<p>Green Skills Presentation: Skills & Training In the North West's Green Spaces</p> <p>Who & Why? What did we find? What we are doing differently? Who are we?</p> <p>Who wrote the report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Brayshay (Stockport MBC) • George Broughton (Cheshire CC) • Peter Campbell (Sefton Council) • Dave Cowling (Wirral MBC) • Eddie Curry (Preston CC) • Wilf Griffiths (Bolton MBC) • Ros Johnson (GreenSpace NW) • Shirley Parkinson (Hyndburn BC) • Dave Kelly (Liverpool CC) • Why skills & training? • What went wrong? • 1960s period of investment • Horticultural standards • Apprenticeships • Training managed in-house 	
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1980s – funding declines • Training centres dismantled • Roles simplified to task lists • Funding reduced 	
7.4	<p>What is the current situation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of a recognised or recognisable home within local government for parks • Low diversity workforce • Ageing workforce • Little training in managerial / people skills • Poor career prospects • Recruiting quality new staff • Poor public image 	

<p>7.5</p> <p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p> <p>7.9</p> <p>7.10</p> <p>7.11</p>	<p>What did we want to achieve? What did we do? Which areas did the questionnaire explore?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for managing skills • Methods used to increase staff skills • Barriers to skills development • Support needed <p>What did we find? How are authorities identifying training needs? To a large extent appraisals are working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% have a performance appraisal scheme • 78% say that their performance appraisal scheme is effective • 81% say they use it to identify skills shortages <p>In some cases there is room for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% of authorities do not have a training matrix or did not answer • 22% of respondents are not satisfied with their appraisal / professional development schemes <p>What are the barriers to training?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to existing training • 63% - short of funding for training • 33% - corporate allocation is a barrier • Managers struggle to identify relevant training <p>Quality of training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of authorities are satisfied • 93% wanted information on quality of training <p>Content of training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% want more targeted training • Some courses are not meeting employer's needs <p>What other barriers are there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19% don't have resources to take staff away from work • 26% - staff do not want to train • Low staff morale • A need for cultural change 	
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7.12	<p>How is the skills gap being filled?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency in training methods • Apparent low emphasis on 'on the job' training • Evidence of lack of structured coaching and mentoring • 52% have apprenticeship schemes, half of which are satisfied with them • variation in the structure and format of schemes 	
7.13	<p>What are we doing differently?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partners to increase North West training provision • Contributing to the training debate • Encouraging collaboration at a county level • Discussing with Myerscough College a new, accredited course • A seminar on apprenticeships 	
7.14	<p>What do we aspire to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional advocacy for skills • Increase funding • Support for managers who need to effect cultural change • Examples of continued professional development systems • Examples of structured approaches to on the job training • Work with existing courses to tailor them to employer's training needs 	
8.		
8.1	<p>A call for national action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for Green Skills • Industry Standard Competency Framework • Better coordination of current training provision 	
8.2	<p>Play England</p> <p>Green Spaces & Play, Ben Ward Regional Programme Manager Play England Good Childhood Inquiry</p>	
8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •67% of eight –ten year olds have never been to a shop or park on their own •43% of adults questioned thought 14 was the earliest age children should be able to go out unsupervised •1/3 of 8-10 year olds have never played out without an adult •Only 17% of children agreed with the statement "my area cares 	

	about its young people	
8.4	<p>Why are children's needs so important? Children depend on the public realm more than adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Forms their world view •Eco-child? •Happy children = Happy Family = Happy Community! <p>£155m for England South West Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Development of cross –cutting play strategies & local play leads •SW Play England Team 	
8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Seminars /Events: Ideas are there “innovation if you dare” , •Natural Play, organic, loose, sand •Focus on Play Rangers, parkies, parents /community organisations •Maintenance budget •Should we have specific play areas? •Can't be formulaic, based on evolving feedback with CYP <p>Conclusion:</p>	
8.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Need to link children agendas and public realm •Children's opportunities for play lack the freedom of older generations •Need to think strategically, •Great opportunity to influence and make changes, we need to take risks! Involve the community and be creative! 	
8.7	<p>BW thanked everyone and said it would be good to start working together. He discussed Children's Policy and how this could be brought together in a local way. There was an article in the Guardian the weekend before last on unsupervised play. It highlighted the dilemma in both agendas to improve space and allow children out to play.</p> <p>NJ used to inspect parks, stating that professionals should be more confident and aware of danger myths. FM said that parents are made to feel guilty due to exposed risk. A discussion ensued</p>	
8.8	<p>on risk.</p> <p>The Good Childhood Inquiry has been published by the Children's Society. 71% of stories about young people are negative. UNICEF report Child Poverty in Rich Countries 2005; Holland exemplifies. Developed Homezone initiative.</p>	

	<p>Kids with access to green space and able to experience the outdoors environment contribute to society.</p> <p>£155mn – England Play England Projects 10% - Innovation Fund 10% - Regional Infrastructure (Play England) 80% - Allocated to all 2nd tier and unitary local authority areas. Grants of between £10-250k. Ringfenced sums by Local Authorities are based on population and deprivation. Pot closes in Dec 07. Each area has developed local play strategies and projects submitted to BIG lottery fund. 45 areas have ringfenced the money, can access it.</p> <p>8.9 BW encouraged SW to get involved in play strategies. Contact the Play England team. BW in North, Jane Hembrow in South. All to promote Play Ranger Conference on 16th November, Play Pay on 1st August. Maintenance budgets were discussed, and the importance of raising the profile of play annually, of play areas and streets. The Play England team can provide support for events undertaken and Play Pay.</p> <p>8.10 The process of developing a Play Strategy was discussed for Plymouth. They have had a meeting with key players, but money provided cannot fund the development of the play strategy itself. The difficulty for Las is that no one person is responsible for play; there are different departments such as Education, Parks and Housing. In Torbay, 80% of the Play strategy actions have been completed; Play policy and strategy and the ToR.</p> <p>8.11 SM offered to circulate PE event notices. BW and JH to email adverts to SM. Regional and National coverage hoped for. PE event at Eden is aimed to support Local Authorities and share good practice. PW said that BCC has learnt lessons from non-equipped play grounds. PF said that play is split between leisure, which has a play strategy, and parks. Exeter CC are developing a play strategy and PF received a feedback report, including true and perceived hazards, which highlighted issues facing parks services. They have learnt from this process and repeated. Exeter CC has an increased number of formal play areas, they also leave tree logs and rocks in corners. Sometimes these are used, but sometimes they are abused, eg bottles are smashed on them.</p>	<p>BW/JH</p>
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<p>8.12</p>	<p>PW suggested that it would be useful to identify 'how not to do Play Rangers' flyer including learning from BANES and S, Gloucester.</p> <p>NW said that Natural England are using Water Recreation Strategy and Forestry Commission to develop a national play strategy. Play by stealth to encourage kids outdoors and they are looking at the relationship between indoors and outdoors play. Potential to link to Defra diversity agenda.</p> <p>BW said that S Bristol's CSV playful idea bid has been successful. NJ said that Plymouth has done Play Day consultation and made a bid for £578,000 for Play Rangers and capital schemes for innovative play in this round.</p>	
<p>8.13</p>	<p>BS said that Play Bids include rangers and Play Bus – interested in Natural Play which links to background in countryside education.</p> <p>BS said that N Somerset have split play, into strategic and internal teams. Housing stock has been sold off for MUGA</p> <p>BW mentioned Play Pods, steel containers of resources and materials.</p> <p>HK said that Mid Devon have a September bid and their play strategy is in draft form. They are identifying projects through consultation with local kids and community groups.</p> <p>LM said that Teignbride has a strategy and has had a successful bid through direct play and rangers.</p> <p>HC said that Sedgemoor have involved the local voluntary sector, with a full consultation last march informing strategy development. There are 2 projects planned, play rangers set up and infrastructure.</p> <p>BH: Kennet are having a 2 tier LA restructure so all references will be to county council. Key points are outdoor/natural play.</p>	
<p>9. 9.1</p>	<p>FM: Gloucester's play strategy is currently in the first bid round, with a play ranger scheme being set up. Improving standards in local play areas is making links with streetcare officers who are being hired and led by community development.</p> <p>AC: Bath and NE Somerset have a play development officer in community services who is leading urban and rural area play bus schemes in partnership with South Gloucestershire, based around natural play and linked to research with the University of the West of England.</p> <p>PW: BCC hope to get money for play areas, rangers and a new play park which links to LAAs.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Any Other Business</p>		

<p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p>	<p>Green Flag Award</p> <p>RT stated that he is the SW rep from the GFA Judges Committee and attends the GFA Steering Group, therefore there is an opportunity to provide direct feedback from the SW. They will be interested in GFA changes, such as criteria, self appraisal and applications and want to take feedback from 2007 judging. AC said that he was concerned about any changes to be made, as applicants will already be planning 2008 applications. NJ mentioned the possibility of bi-annual assessment, as a 2 year application round could be useful due to the number of judges and applicants.</p> <p>RT stated a need to encourage more new judges.</p> <p>AC asked what could be done if an LA wants to apply for 12 sites.</p> <p>Please email RT with GFA Feedback.</p> <p>People, Spaces, Places, Culture SW: Regional Cultural Commentaries.</p> <p>PW mentioned the possibility of influencing RCC, of which drafts talk about ANGST Standards. GSSW to send letter to request references to Parks and Open Spaces. Steering Group will respond, as are NW and NE workshops. Draft response to be circulated.</p> <p>Green space and the Natural Environment; deadline 31st July.</p> <p>BANES: play design network. BW to provide SM with contact details.</p> <p>PW mentioned how the centralisation of procurement is leading away from diversity and infrastructure, asking if Play England opposes this. BW agreed. PW proposed that this should be raised as part of the design forum.</p> <p>RT said that this is rooted in Gerschon Report on money saving; highlighting that 2 companies should be used.</p> <p>NJ found that one company provide IT why not local play equipment – this was identified as a potential threat to the work of Play England.</p>	<p>BW</p>
	<p>Date of the Next Meeting</p>	
	<p>18th September – Green Flag Awards 2008 & Strategy and Planning. SM to invite Paul Todd</p>	

	<p>11th December – Anti Social Behaviour 2008/09 agenda to be produced.</p> <p>13th March – Equality, Inclusion and Diversity. PW to invite Sustrans Officer with regard to DDA Issues.</p>	
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