



KNP Board Meeting Minutes for 25th February 2022
Meeting held on Microsoft Teams

Attendees	
Matthew Balfour	KNP Chair
Gary Walters	KNP Vice Chair
Evan Bowen-Jones	Kent Wildlife Trust
Susan Carey	Kent County Council
Paul Clarke	Kent Public Health
Chris Drake	Kent County Council (KNP Co-ordinator)
Alan Jarrett	Medway Council
Nick Johannsen	Kent Downs AONB Unit
Rob Jarman	Kent Planning Officers Group (Maidstone Borough Council)
Gregor Mutch	Brett Aggregates
Louise Hutchby	Natural England (in place of Sue Beale)
Helen Shulver	Kent County Council – Kent Environment Strategy
Charles Tassell	Country Land & Business Association
Guests	
Matthew Woodcock	Forestry Commission
James Clow	Kent County Council
Dr Paul Tinsley-Marshall	Kent Wildlife Trust
Apologies	
Liz Milne	Kent County Council (KNP MWG Chair)
Abi Ojo	Kent Public Health
Anjan Ghosh	Director of Public Health KCC
Sue Beale	Natural England

Actions	Who
Biodiversity Net Gain regulations and implementation consultation – check with Liz and SENP on who is responding – consider KNP letter/response.	Chris
KNP letter of response to the Government’s response to the Landscape Review	Chris (Evan/Nick)
Set up a planning meeting with Evan/Paul Hadaway and others to plan a “Data for Nature” meeting/workshop, provisionally on the September Board date.	Chris/Evan
Scope the possibilities of a “Making Money from Nature” event involving landowners and those who can advise on this.	Matthew, Gary, and Chris
Share information on “where your food come from” CLA events	Charles

Minutes

Introductions, apologies, and declaration of interests – Susan Carey

For the benefit of new Board member Helen Shulver and guests, a full round table of introduction's was provided. Apologies noted above. No declarations of interest.

Minutes of the last Board meeting & matters arising – Susan Carey

The minutes for December were recognised as a true record and actions marked as complete.

Introduction from the new KNP Chair Matthew Balfour

As interim Chair, Susan Carey (Cabinet Member for Environment, KCC) welcomed Matthew Balfour as the new KNP Chair. She recognised the work Matthew had been involved some time previously, as Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport at KCC, before Leader Roger Gough split the role.

Matthew thanked Susan for her kind words and recognised the work of his predecessor Caroline Jessel who had put KNP on the map he said. Matthew said he wanted the KNP to be the body people come to in Kent and Medway and to be the coordinating body for various groups. He also wants to get the work KNP is doing more widely recognised.

Matthew announced Gary Walters as his Vice Chair and the Board were happy with this decision. Gary has been a member of the Board for several years and was also previously CLA Chair for Kent.

Tree Establishment in Kent

Presentation from James Clow, Kent Tree Strategy Officer, KCC.

What follows is a summary of the presentation, but further details can be found in James' power point which has been circulated with these minutes.

The Kent Tree Strategy Officer is a new role in Liz Milne's team and James started in November. He was immediately involved in a Trees Call for Action Fund Expression of interest for the county and a full application has now been submitted, the result will be known next month.

"Plan Tree, the Kent Tree Establishment Strategy 2021-2031" has been drawn up and will go out to Public Consultation from 8th March to 2nd May. A key aspiration is that the county's tree cover will be extended by 1.5 million, establishing one new tree for every resident living in the county. Also, that by 2050, Kent will have an average tree canopy cover of 19%, the target recommended by the Committee on Climate Change. The current value is 17%. Kent needs a 2% increase in average canopy cover.

James described how farmers, nature-based solutions and targeting landowners will be the focus of his work over the next two years. He wanted to assure the Board that as well as tree planting, natural regeneration is equally important, and this is reflected in the England Tree Action Plan. Even sites such as the Knepp estate, known for natural regeneration, actually used a mixed approach, James said.

Plan Tree is about contributing to Kent County Council's, and the county's, net zero targets and tackling the multiple threats to our trees but has multiple objectives including ones around amenity

and the economy. James highlighted Jeskins, the Forestry Commission site near Gravesend as a good case study for this approach. This now has 20% canopy cover and good all-round land use.

To achieve the ambition, a partnership approach to identifying and purchasing land will be essential and this will then be handed over to delivery partners - Forestry Commission and others to conduct the work. James also said that the planning system will be key to a successful approach. KCC's own estate will be part of the picture. Overall, James said that a 2% delivery trajectory is needed, right up to 2032, so the work needs to be delivered at pace.

James described the current Trees Call for Action Fund bid, which has been submitted to deliver a three-year partnership for this work. This national HLF money will be used for woodland creation, a tree officer, and a student placement.

It would also be used to deliver 'Finds,' a computer model and decision-making tool to locate and maximise nature-based solutions. In terms of "right tree, right place" this will be particularly helpful for identifying where we do not want to plant trees as much as where we need to.

Presentation from Louise Hutchby, Woodland Senior Advisor, Natural England

Louise said that her new post was created because of the England Tree Action Plan 2021 – 24, the driver being the twin climate and ecological crisis – with tree planting benefitting both. Louise will be working to ensure strong links with the emerging Nature Recovery Network so that tree planting benefits this rather than causing conflicts in terms of "right tree, right place".

Update from Matthew Woodcock, Forestry Commission

Matthew started by highlighting the "Climate Change Net Zero UK report 2021" and the principal that "people need trees, but trees need people" – trees need management, but it will be important to have woodland near conurbations where people can benefit. Matthew also highlighted the "England Tree Action Plan 2021 – 24" which highlights modern forestry approaches such as "treescape", aimed at achieving these multiple benefits.

The challenges from Dutch elm disease through to ash dieback were highlighted along with the eight toothed spruce bark beetle, which gets blown in from the continent, meaning that spruce needs to be actively managed.

Matthew mentioned the importance of agro forestry in Kent, good examples being Oakover nurseries which grow trees on and collect seed. He said that if the approach that James had highlighted was to succeed, landowners will be key and they will need to understand the full value of their land, not just the financial value.

He welcomed other developments such as the Kent renewable energy power station in Dover and the Torry Hill estate which had reinvigorated the chestnut market

Matthew said we need a cultural change in societies attitude to trees and woodland, a big vision is needed along with an entrepreneurial approach.

Questions for James, Louise, and Matthew

Matthew Balfour said that his nephew is involved in the Home-Grown House project, for the record in case there were any conflicts of interest. In terms of the work James' had outlined, he also said we need to get the message out there that income streams exist in this area.

Paul Clarke asked if public health in terms of urban air quality, heat islands and noise was being considered. James said, these multiple benefits are being considered and some districts had also applied for the Urban Tree Challenge funding. James said that Highways planted 1,200 trees last year in a scheme where the public pay for the planting, also that orchard projects were happening in urban areas such as Gravesend.

James said that in all this, there is a big annual loss of existing trees though storms and diseases and that this needs to be factored into the work. He suggested Biodiversity Net Gain will help with urban trees, but other habitats, such as grassland and wetland will also be created.

Charles Tassell commented on the current overload of policy that farmers have to look at such as ELMS, warning that the message on trees could get lost in this "noise". He also raised a question around who would own the carbon captured across all this work?

Evan said that KWT had been working with James on aspects of this work and had written a letter of support for the bid. He suggested that KNP needs to consider how this work links to other areas, not just Wilder Carbon, but Biodiversity Net Gain and Nature Recovery Network. Nick agreed that an overarching approach would be useful.

James added that in terms of stacked benefits, one piece of land can have multiple benefits and multiple income streams. Having to make decisions now bearing in mind all these multiple benefits is the difficult part. Comments were made around businesses needing to consider all their net gain requirements and for local authorities to be in setting as much as offsetting.

James said that he will be running strategic workshops in March/April alongside the consultation.

ACTION: circulate detail of strategic workshops to KNP.

It was noted that other habitats such as saltmarsh and opportunities such as managed retreat need to contribute to net zero along with tree planting and this is where nature-based solutions come into play. Louise stressed that soil holds more carbon than anything else and soil quality needs to be a big part of the picture.

It was noted that farmers can register with the carbon code.

Susan highlighted the award KCC received for the Cool Towns Project in Margate, which included various elements including Sustainable Urban Drainage. She suggested Public Health would be a good element to include in the design for future projects.

The item concluded with a discussion about engagement and the benefits of one overarching plan to pull together Plan Tree, Plan Sea and various other elements ranging from nature-based solutions to biodiversity net gain.

Susan said the council is obliged to fulfil, Plan Tree and will not be shelving any strategies, but would be willing to work on broader approaches if it helped tie the various elements together. The Board felt KNP is positioned to assist with this approach and to ensure this all this work feeds into the nature recovery network.

Action on engagement is picked up again under item 7.


Finalised State of Nature in Kent report content

Presentation from Dr Paul Tinsley-Marshall, Conservation Evidence Manager at KWT

Paul's Power Point has also been circulated with these minutes.

This KNP report is now complete, but still requires graphic design before publication, however, the content was provided to the Board with the agenda and those links are repeated here: -

Headlines final version:

 [KWT_CE_SoNiK_headlines_and_key_findings_0.7_FINAL.docx](#)

Conclusion final version:

 <https://kentwildlife.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/StateofNatureKent740/EQWQYPsCvslFhe04e9GTXqlBDve3IHvOOhxhZdDkfgg1tw?e=B6fvVC>

Report final content:

 [SoNiK_Final_Content](#)

Paul is the project manager who along with Alana Skilbeck at KWT pulled together the report which includes contributions from sixty-one individuals across the county from a range of organisations.

The work was governed by a KNP steering group Chaired by Mark Pullin of Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (formally a KNP Board member), funded by KCC (KNP), KWT and Kent Planning Officers Group and the content was approved by these three organisations.

The report marks a real breakthrough by the use of the Landscape Information Tool developed by the Nature's Sure Connected project to facilitate parcel-by-parcel recording of positive management action across a 3-tired rank of management quality (1. beneficial, 2. useful, 3. uncertain)

KNP now has a baseline which can continually be updated, to inform nature recovery work, and be revisited in future State of Nature reports. One of the major limitations encountered in the application of the tool was the low engagement by stakeholders in the process of data contribution. Of the 70 organisations approached, 38 (54%) provided data in some form. Given the limitations, it is likely that the results underestimate the area of land influenced for conservation.

The reasons for this poor uptake are explored in the report, but KNP and KWT will pick this up and see how stakeholders can be supported, the tool promoted, and more comprehensive data gathered in future. However, as this is a new approach the data presented in SoNiK is a real step in the right direction and presents a means of data gathering going forward.

The report provided the opportunity to gather data for 2020 and to compare this with the previous baseline data gathered in 2016. There was a 4.2% decrease in the area of land positively managed over this period. Losses on land are mainly due to the expiration of entry level environmental

stewardship schemes between 2016 and 2020. Areas under countryside stewardship scheme agreements, which were revised in 2016, do not appear to recoup these losses. The results of a comparative analysis show losses in the terrestrial surface area under management, while significant gains are observed in the marine environment.

The good news in terms of the terrestrial environment is that the data shows a net increase in areas under management quality rating of 1, the criteria for which includes - site protected; practical work taking place and conservation grazing in place. The data also shows that over half the area in the study experienced no change from its existing status with a quality rating of 1.

The red data list assessment for Kent represents another first in the report, showing that of the 3,684 species in Kent that have had their UK threat status assessed, 372 (10%) of extant species are classified as threatened with extinction from Great Britain. This is below the proportion reported for UK as a whole (15%) in the 2019 UK State of Nature report.

The Drivers for change chapters describe the pressures on biodiversity over the last ten years and other negative and positive developments, while the Conservation chapters describe the effort made to address these pressures and the degree of success.

The Key findings section, picks out the Headlines and also cross references either explicitly or thematically with the Kent Biodiversity Strategy objectives.

The conclusions of the report will not be a surprise. There is much to celebrate in the fortunes of wildlife of Kent, but the overwhelming message is clear: in spite of significant efforts, we have not done enough. Kent's nature continues to be subject to an increasing barrage of coinciding threats. Significant collective action at scale is required if we are to reverse declines and restore a thriving natural environment for wildlife and people.

The Conclusions of the report are drawn together under four broad headings:

Evidence: - A lack of evidence has hindered our ability to report on changes over the last ten years. Fit-for purpose monitoring and evidence must be front and centre of strategies to restore Kent's nature and resourced appropriately.

Collaboration: - Challenges and issues can't be tackled at single organisation or site-scales. We need to increasingly work together by default to deliver real progress and be innovative in our pursuit of collective action.

Investment: - Secure greater investment in nature's recovery. Innovate, diversify income streams, and develop new models of sustainable financing. Collaborate more often and more effectively to reduce competition for resources among our community. Use evidence to direct investment for the greatest potential impact.

Engagement: - We need to make our countryside even more accessible, to promote its health and wellbeing benefits, and a long-term, meaningful connection with nature that will inspire all to protect and respect it. Whether a decision-maker, local politician, developer, planner, land manager, farmer, conservation organisation, amateur naturalist, volunteer, someone with an interest in our natural world or simply anyone who lives or works in Kent, this report is relevant to all.

Questions for Paul

Gary congratulated Paul and all those involved on the completion of an excellent report but said that the main challenges now will be keeping it up to date and using it to inform what we do next.

Evan agreed and said that the “call to action” will be key and he will be working with Paul Hadaway at KWT, Chris and other on this.

Matthew asked about publicity, suggesting that the media will focus on just the bad news. Evan said this too was an area KWT and KCC are working on to get the message right, but Matthew and Evan agreed that the “bad news” has to be part of the story.

Evan said that the online presentation of the report will be important as even while the report has been written there have been developments including in KWT’s GIS capabilities and aspects relating to nature-based solutions and policy development that will need to be updated alongside publication of the report.

Presentation from Chris Drake

Chris outline the purpose of the report, publicity, and next steps.

He said it represented a more comprehensive baseline than we have never had before and amongst other things it will make it easier to take forward biodiversity strategy objectives and to move forward with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, as State of Nature reports will be key evidence base for this.

Chris emphasised that the report is also a call to action for all and while KNP are a strategic coordinating body, a wide range of organisations in the county will need to respond to it. He urged the Board to look at the conclusion which sets out the call to action.

These next steps and its use in decision making, risk management, advocacy, and funding all need to be scrutinised and taken forward by KNP and KWT; the KNP Management Working Group may be a useful forum for some of this work.

The outcome of this work will be part of the online presentation on the associated State of Nature web pages which will be set up alongside the report when it is published and be continually updated.

Publicity will be KNP led with support from KWT, and Chris would welcome suggestions on any particular publications which need to be targeted.

There will be a delay in publication while KWT procure a graphic designer, but in the meantime the content is available for the Board and Management Working Group to digest and start putting to use in the work of the partnership.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked Paul, KWT, the contributors and Chris for all their hard work on an excellent report that will be of great importance to KNP and the county.

Item 6 Brief updates

a) Chris on the following:

South East Nature Partnership

Caroline Jessel is now the overall Chair with the aim of getting this informal partnership of LNP's (as approved by Defra) properly resourced. There are four annual meetings plus four meetings of each of the LNP Chairs and Matthew will attend both of these.

Environment Act.

A consultation on targets for the Act was supposed to have been announced this month, but this has not happened, however KNP will need to respond, or this could be led by SENP.

Biodiversity Net Gain

There is currently a consultation on "Biodiversity Net Gain regulations and implementation".

ACTION: Chris to check with SENP colleagues and Liz Milne on who is responding and KNP may need to write a specific response. The consultation ends on the 5 April.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

While we are waiting on secondary legislation, Liz will be picking up the KNP/KWT sub group on this, which includes ongoing mapping and principles work.

University of Kent letter of support

As interim Chair Susan Carey wrote a letter of support for this bid to the UK Research and Innovation fund for a project proposal entitled: "Capturing the multiple values of biodiversity, integrating the economics of, and finance for, biodiversity into decision-making at multiple scales". The decision will not be made for months, but if successful the University will want to interview KNP members.

b) Government's response to the Landscape Review - Nick Johannsen

This government response to the Glover report was published in January, Nick's presentation covered the following points: -

AONB's have some similar purposes to National Parks, but vastly less money. This is despite AONB's sometimes having greater pressures to deal with, while providing the same benefits as National Parks to the public.

Chapter 2 sets out how protected landscapes will be at the heart of delivering nature recovery and climate policies, including links to the 25-year plan and a key role in achieving the governments ambitious target to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030. This is about areas being "appropriately managed for nature" which a lot of the AONB is currently not.

For AONB and Parks to genuinely be part of the 30 by 30 commitment a very substantial change in biodiversity enhancement would be required (in just 8 years).

Nick suggested that, overall, the review and government response provides better levers for change, but without the funding needed to achieve that change. Private finance and investment might have to be the answer to the funding gap.

The Chair opened up for questions.

Evan agreed that while the review was helpful, private finance will need to be secured

Matthew asked if it would be helpful for KNP to write a response to the government and Nick said this would be helpful along with responses from organisations within the KNP.

KWT will write a separate letter but can inform the KNP letter which Nick can assist Chris with.

ACTION: KNP letter of response drafted and agreed for the 9 April deadline.

Item 7 Agreeing forward Board and KNP agenda 2022 – Chris

The joint Board/MWG meeting in May will have a marine and aquatic focus, moving forward with areas discussed at MWG and SENP at the end of last year. Chris will work up a proposal on this for Matthew. The meeting will be face to face at a venue appropriate to the theme.

This is part of a rolling forward agenda tied into nature-based solutions, so today's meeting with the tree focus has been part of that approach.

The question was raised as to what we might cover at the September Board meeting. Evan suggested that KWT could provide a live GIS demonstration, focused on the Nature Recovery Network, but bringing in aspects such as Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Biodiversity Net Gain opportunity mapping and nature-based solution opportunity mapping.

He sees this as an evolution of some sort of GIS landscape opportunity tool and the preparatory work will be about how we pull evidence together. The meeting could look at what we have what we might need and what the applications will be. Evan sees this as a way of achieving the overview mentioned earlier on in the meeting of bringing together plan's Bee, Tree, Sea and various other work going on in the county and putting it on one map.

Matthew welcomed this, suggesting the September session might be called "Data for Nature", he said that the health angle will also need to be brought into this.

ACTION: Chris to set up a planning meeting with Evan/Paul Hadaway and others to plan this "Data for Nature meeting/workshop and at this planning meeting to also consider the links between the various plans and State of Nature report.

Matthew added that in the first instance Chris is going to pull together a spider map of all the various environmental strategies, plans and policies for the county.

Chris also reminded the Board that they had agreed the need to engage landowners, land managers and farmers on the nature-based solutions agenda. For this external event, Matthew wondered if all the people who can advise land managers and show how they can make money from nature could be brought together with farmers and landowners. This could be along the lines of "Making Money from Nature, but KNP needs resources to undertake such work. Possibly some of the aims can be achieved by attending external events.

ACTION: Matthew, Gary, and Chris to scope the possibilities of "Making Money from Nature" event.

Gary stressed the importance of future generations in nature recovery and raised the idea of a KNP education piece including possibly a focus on environmental curriculum. He asked if there was any

body in Kent coordinating this. Susan said there was not. Matthew said we must look at this in the round in terms of how KNP engages with a range of other sectors.

Charles recommended the Kent Show ground as a venue, as CLA are using it for “where your food come from” events this year. The John Hendry centre is being used for this. He also said that the Kent County Agricultural Society want to raise their profile with farmers

Item 8 AOB

Chris suggested Board members should put a travel buffer around Sept and Nov meetings as they might be face to face, depending on the nature of the meeting and external factors.