

BIHIP Management Meeting 1 November 2007

Northmoor Trust, Little Wittenham.

Peter Savill (Chairman, BIHIP)
John Davis (Treasurer, BIHIP);
Jason Hubert (Secretary, BIHIP)
Michael Carey (Chairman, Sycamore)
Jo Clark (Secretary, Oak and Ash)
John Fennessy (Chairman, Oak)
Bede Howell (Vice-Chairman, Oak)
Rik Pakenham (Chairman, Cherry)
Geraint Richards (Chairman, Sweet Chestnut)
Karen Russell (Secretary, Cherry)
Sir Ben Slade (Chairman, Walnut)
Graham Taylor (Chairman, Ash)

Also present:

David Boshier; Jeff Burley; Jesús Cordero; Gerry Douglas; Gabriel Hemery; Ted Horgan; Scott Wilson, Gavin Munro; Edward Stenhouse

Apologies

Andrew Barbour (Chairman, Birch); Peter Buckley (Sec., Sweet Chestnut); Pat Doody (V. Chairman, Ash); Douglas Malcolm (Sec., Birch); Hannah Taylor (Sec., Sycamore)

2. *Minutes*

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

3. *Matters arising not on the agenda*

All other points were covered by the agenda.

4. *Report on visit to Denmark*

PS gave a report on the successful trip to Denmark. JC suggested that a visit to Bill Blight's estate would be a possible location for a future visit. Other suggestions were welcomed.

5. *Website*

Jesús Cordero demonstrated the new version of the BIHIP website. The website will have a new address www.bihip.org since it has been impossible to trace the owner of the old address (bihip.com). Hopefully the old address will become deregistered in the middle of November and the old site will disappear. The main officer bearers now have e-mail set up using the standard format name@bihip.org; the secretaries of the groups will also have similar addresses. All the organisations, NGOs, consultants and businesses involved in BIHIP will have links on the website. Reciprocal links will be requested to help the Google rating. A bibliography of peer reviewed papers with a link to the on-line source would be included. An archive of old BIHIP reports was also thought to be important. PS and GH offered to undertake the collating and scanning of these reports. For each group the Secretary will be asked to provide a species report to fill the web page following a standard format.

Action: Jesús – make changes to the web pages
PS and GH – collating and scanning old reports

Group Secretaries: Provide information to fill the web pages.

6. *BIHIP policy paper on Tree Improvement and genetic diversity*

PS introduced the paper written by DB and recommended that BIHIP as a whole should accept it. Responses for or against would be accepted over the next two weeks, further changes to the text

would not be accepted, except for the picture captions, and the only options were to accept or reject this paper as a BIHIP policy brief. DB provided some more background on the process leading to the preparation of this draft. The preparation of the paper had highlighted the fact that other policy briefs were also needed on a variety of topics. The option to print copies had been explored and the cost for 1000 leaflets would be approximately £200, an extra 100 copies would be £6. A pdf version would also be placed on the website. The printed copies would be used for fund raising and could be placed as an insert into forestry journals and magazines. GH commented that the title was unclear, other comments were that the paper would not fit easily with the BIHT flyer and thought would be needed to ensure more consistent branding. The captions would need to explain the pictures clearly. It was agreed that £500 would be put aside to print copies.

Other topics for possible policy papers were:

- Role of native woodlands
- Biomass
- Wildlife and Managed Woodlands
- Productive Ancient Woodlands

Action: All to read
Jesús and DB to consider the design

7. *Species Groups*

Business Plans: the only groups remaining to consider business plans are the Walnut, Cherry and Birch groups. All the groups were urged to create the plans so they can be placed on the website. JD mentioned that they greatly helped his fund raising activities.

Breeding Strategies: (combined with *item 9. Possible employment of a part time research co-ordinator*) One challenge for the business plans is a coherent analysis of breeding strategies. Therefore it was felt that support was needed to assist with this area. PS felt that BIHIP would require assistance with the development of the breeding plans and that the part time co-ordinator would be able to undertake this work. He proposed that David Boshier would be suitably qualified to do this. DB proposed an options type of analysis based on different strategies for the different species. This would allow for a more focused approach and greater confidence that the approaches adopted would be optimal for the longer term. JD confirmed that £30,000 could be used to fund this post on a part time basis since current uncommitted funds were now £49,852. The aim would be to undertake this analysis for all the species in approximately 12 – 18 months. Species priorities would need to be determined by the Management Committee. Cherry data are currently held at EMR and access to this could be restricted in the future, hence this and ash were felt to be the priorities.

In support of this proposal, GH outlined his plans for a new trust and offered future accommodation for BIHIP and, in the mean time, the use of his Forestry Horizons office as a central postal address.

MC asked for an idea of the responsibilities involved in the job. PS suggested that as well as the development of the breeding plans it could also keep an eye on the management and measurement of the trials. In the short term the post should focus on breeding strategies and be on a contract basis. The management of the contract could be through a research management group that would meet on an ad hoc basis and would consist of those with a research background and interest.

It was agreed that a 12-month contract was felt to be the best way ahead, overseen by the ad hoc research management group. Other elements to the job could involve management of the plus tree database and assistance with registration of seed stands.

Action: PS to organise job description

8. *Establishment of a Beech Group*

A summary of SW's recommendations was circulated. SW presented his work that had involved visiting old FC provenance trials, starting a database of superior plus trees and stands based on the existing National register and re-examining the old FC plus trees. This was complemented by a SFT grant to search for plus trees in Wales. There were still gaps in other regions in the country.

SW has also published papers in a couple of journals and sounded out interest for the establishment of a Beech Group.

SW noted that interest in beech was far stronger in Scotland than in S England and this was likely to become increasingly the case under climate change. Currently, a big issue is the lack of a market and the very strong competition from Europe. In Ireland there is still interest in beech and it is one of the four species being commonly planted there. There were no strong objections to the creation of a Beech group. PS asked SW to try and pull together a group over the next 6-12 months and report back to the management committee.

Action: SW

9. Possible employment of a part time research co-ordinator

This was covered under item 7.

10. Treasurer's Report and Fund Raising

JD provided the audited accounts for BIHT, he noted that £107 remains in the BIHIP account to keep this open, JD receives 10% commission on money raised, £53,938 is currently in the account of which only £17,958 is uncommitted. JH provided an outline of changes to the FC research commissioning process and an initial project possibly suitable for submission to the FC would be the analysis of breeding strategies. An advantage of the new FC system would be that it would allow for bids to extend over more than one year. JD suggested that given the change in system it would be better to approach DANI once again for funding.

11. Progress with BIHT in UK and Ireland

JD has still to recover gift aid on some of the contributions. JF is still to establish this facility in Ireland. BIHT in Ireland has now received the deeds for the establishment of the charity, some clauses had been adjusted by the Revenue Commissioners for JF to examine. He has been happy to accept these changes and charitable status was now finally about to become established in Ireland. JB thanked JF for all his efforts in undertaking the work to gain charitable status for BIHT in Ireland.

12. Election of Honorary Officers

Nominations were received for Peter Savill (Chairman), John Davis (Treasurer) and Jason Hubert (Secretary) from Jeff Burley and seconded by John Fennessy. They were elected unopposed with no abstentions. JB gave a vote of thanks for their work over the last three years.

13. Possible change of name

GH raised the issue that BIHIP is a very long name for the organisation, but it does have some name recognition. GH proposed that the acronym would remain but the full name of the organisation would be "British and Irish Hardwoods Programme" thereby giving a larger scope to the overall group. In addition a strap line would be added to the logo "delivering productive and healthy woodlands for society and the environment". It was felt that the British and Irish link was important to recognise, but that the word improvement was open to misinterpretation by the general public. BH suggested Better Broadleaves as a strap line. KR suggested "evolving woodlands". A majority were in favour of retaining the name and incorporating a strap line, but shorter than the one that GH proposed. A counter proposal was "delivering productive and healthy woodlands", also "productive and healthy woodlands". Suggestions were requested by 15th November and then a decision would be made by a group organised by PS.

Action: PS

14. AOB

GR raised the fact that Woodland Heritage would be visiting two estates in Herefordshire on 13-15 June 2008 and this would be an excellent opportunity to promote BIHIP and possibly raise some further funds.

ES raised the issue of climate change and carbon sequestration. JB gave a brief response to this issue. ES suggested that we should prioritise carbon sequestration more strongly. PS stressed that our main aim was tree breeding rather than carbon sequestration although it could be a useful point for fund raising. JB noted that a recent publication by CABI deals with this issue.

The date of the next Management Meeting would be 1st May 2008 at Pryor and Ricketts Offices in Herefordshire.

PS thanked everybody and closed the meeting.