



Notes from the 8th Meeting of the Oak Processionary Moth Outbreak Management Team

12:30pm, 24 February 2011
Richmond Park, London

Present:

Stewart Snape, Deputy Head of Plant Health (Chair)
Christine Tilbury, Forest Research
Nigel Straw, Forest Research
David Williams, Forest Research
Mike Robinson, Plant Health and Seeds Inspector, Fera
Richard Gill, Sheffield City Council
Martin Townsend, Consultant Ecologist
Ben Clutterbuck, London Borough of Ealing
Matthew Oates, National Trust
Barry Walsh, HPA
David Lofthouse, London Tree Officers Association
Arthur Cullen, West Berkshire County Council
Stewart Souden, West Berkshire County Council
Mike Turner, The Royal Parks
Gillian Jonusas, The Royal Parks
Simon Richards, The Royal Parks
Tony Kirkham, Head of the Arboretum and Horticultural Services, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Apologies:

Craig Ruddick, London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames; Monique Simmonds, Kew Gardens; Scott Meadows, States of Jersey Department of the Environment; Gary Rimmer, London Borough of Brent;

Agenda Item 1: Welcome

Stewart Snape thanked everyone for attending and welcomed them to the meeting.

Stewart welcomed Simon Richards and thanked him for agreeing to host the meeting in Richmond Park.

Barry Walsh explained that he would be leaving the meeting early and asked that if there were any questions for him, that they be taken early.

In response to a question (can't remember who from) about the level of human health problems, Barry Walsh confirmed that no significant problems had been reported. Barry also

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confirmed that there was no robust system in place for monitoring the human health effects of this pest specifically. Barry explained that the HPA were looking to the FC to advise them of the best time to expect symptoms to be reported. Stewart Snape confirmed that May/June onward was when the caterpillars were mature enough for their hairs to start to cause problems.

Agenda Item 2: Notes of the meeting held on 4 November 2010

Mike Turner asked that the last paragraph of Item 4 be amended by removing the reference to the need to circulate the plan. This was agreed and the notes of the meeting held on 4 November 2010 were accepted.

Agenda Item 3: Matters arising

Stewart confirmed that he had completed all the actions assigned to him. Stewart deferred Item 7, the Nematode update pending Tony Kirkham's arrival.

3a. Tony confirmed that work was ongoing. The key issue was how to ensure that the nematodes reach the caterpillars. Tony also mentioned that the Dutch operated an integrated management system to help them deal with outbreaks.

Agenda Item 4: 2010 Final report and final survey

Martin Townsend presented the report that he and Ralph had prepared. Mike Turner asked whether the number of nests found was the same as the number of nests treated. Mike explained that Ralph would need to confirm this. Stewart added that he was aware of a few cases of non or late compliance but in the vast majority of cases nests had been dealt with.

Christine Tilbury presented her report and reiterated her concern over the efficacy of the traps. Christine explained that Forest Research intended to investigate the different types of lures that were commercially available and also to investigate the placement of traps.

Agenda Item 5: Richmond Update

Mike Turner confirmed that the The Royal Parks team had produced a management plan. The plan was focussed on Richmond Park but could be used in the other parks if needed. The FC (Nigel Straw) had been consulted. Mike explained that the main method of control would continue to be manual removal of nests.

Stewart Snape asked if the team has considered the risks to the trees and the invertebrate animals that depend on them, from continued infestation. Mike said that they had.

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Agenda Item 6: Pangbourne outbreak

Martin Townsend gave an update on the Pangbourne outbreak. Nigel Straw commented that it was vital to get this outbreak under control because of the largely rural nature of the area the large number of oaks in the area. The plan was to intensively survey this area over the coming months. Stewart Snape confirmed that if colleagues agreed then an OMT could be established for this outbreak.

Agenda Item 7: Strategy Update

Stewart Snape briefly updated the group on the Protected Zone submission. He explained that the proposal had been revised to accommodate a wider buffer zone as requested by EU colleagues. Stewart reported that Roddie Burgess remained confident that the proposal would be accepted in due course.

Stewart confirmed that the FC had been directed by the Minister to abandon eradication efforts in the core infested area. FC resources would now be redirected to protect the buffer zone. An extensive discussion then ensued about how best to allocate FC survey effort and resources. Ben Clutterbuck suggested that it was important to ensure that FC resources were coordinated with those of the London Boroughs. Stewart welcomed this approach but emphasised that time was of the essence and it was important that such coordination happened quickly. To this end Nigel Straw and Stewart Snape agreed to draft an action plan and to circulate it around the OMT in due course. The objective was to ensure that FC and local authorities' resources were deployed to best effect.

Action: Stewart and Nigel would draft an action plan

In response to a question from Ben Clutterbuck about serving notices on owners of infested trees, Stewart confirmed that the Forestry Commission would no longer be doing this in the core area. Ben asked if it would be possible for the FC to re issue notices or to authorise Local Authority staff to issue notices. Stewart thought this unlikely but agreed to discuss it with Roddie Burgess, Head of Plant Health. Stewart reported that it was likely that the FC would have to withdraw all of the outstanding notices.

Action: Stewart would discuss the issue of notices with Roddie Burgess

Stewart advised the group that now that it had been accepted that OPM had become established in the core area, there was not longer any need for an Outbreak Management Team. Stewart added that it was important that some form of OPM management group was retained. A review of the activities of the OMT over the last few years could inform the structure and remit of the new group. The group agreed. Tony Kirkham and Simon Richards offered the facilities at Kew gardens and Richmond Park respectfully for future meetings. Tony Kirkham suggested that two meetings per year would suffice. Stewart agreed to write to colleagues to suggest dates for the next meeting.

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Agenda Item 7a: 2011 Surveillance and Monitoring

Nigel Straw referred to his paper. Nigel reported that the pheromone trapping programme would continue and would be extended to the southwest. Nigel emphasised the importance of increasing surveillance around the Pangbourne outbreak.

Nigel gave a brief update on the Biosecurity bid and reported that it had been rejected by the Defra panel. The group was disappointed to hear this. Dave Lofthouse suggested that members could lobby Ministers.

Stewart emphasised that although we were facing challenging times, the FC had been doing its best to ensure that Biosecurity in general, and OPM in particular was given a high priority. We had managed to ensure that there was no reduction in the available funding, which in the current climate, was no mean feat. It was important that we continued to work together to minimise the spread of OPM. Stewart finished by saying that rather than abandoning the effort the FC would redeploy resources to where they could most effectively support the work of colleagues in the London Boroughs and beyond.

Agenda Item 8: Communications

Charlton Clark presented his paper and asked for comments to be fed back as soon as possible.

Agenda Item 9: AOB

Stewart Souden from West Berkshire County Council thanked the FC for its efforts and assistance in Pangbourne.

Agenda Item 10: Date of Next Meeting

Stewart will canvass dates in due course.